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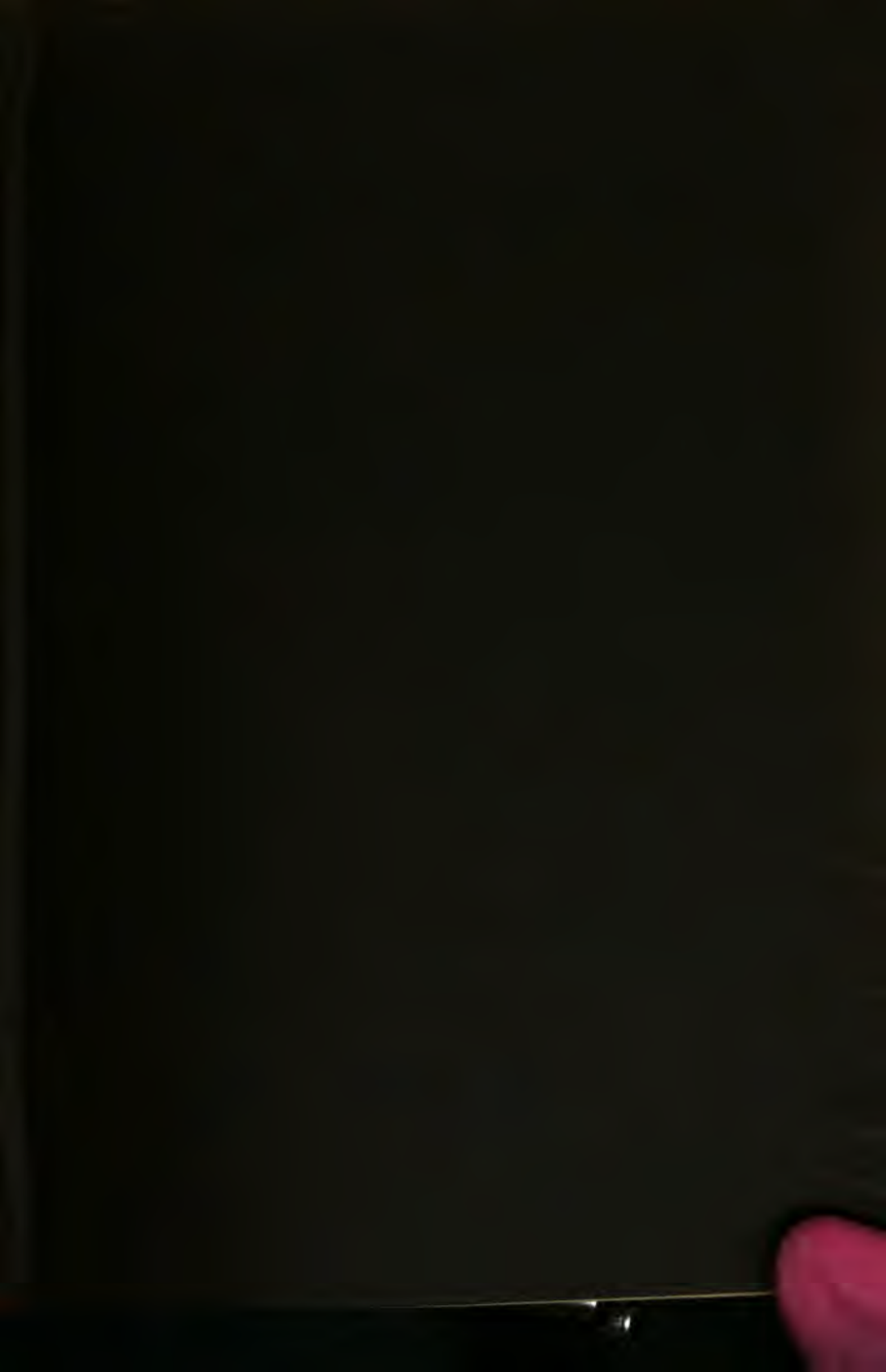
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IN THE GOLDEN DAYS.

VOL. II.

IN THE GOLDEN DAYS

BY

EDNA LYALL

AUTHOR OF "WE TWO," "DONOVAN," ETC.

'It is not but the tempest that doth show
The seaman's cunning; but the field that tries
The captain's courage; and we come to know
Best what men are in their worst jeopardies;
For lo, how many have we seen to grow
To high renown from lowest miseries,
Out of the hands of death, and many a one
T' have been undone, had they not been undone.'
S. DANIEL. 1619.

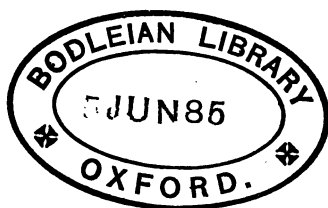
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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IN THE GOLDEN DAYS.

CHAPTER I.

A FALL.

Judge not thy friend until thou standest in his place.

RABBI HILLEL.

It was night. The tenants had long since departed. The tired servants were all asleep. The whole family had retired, and every light in the house, save one, was out. That one light burnt in a dark lantern belonging to Randolph, and it stood on the floor of the little room which led to the musician's gallery. From time immemorial, old Peter and his companions from St. Edmondsbury had supped and

slept in this room on the night of the 12th of May. Colonel Wharncliffe would not hear of allowing them to tramp all the way back to St. Edmondsbury, and this small room, which was never used by anyone else, served as a shelter for the musicians. Its accommodation was certainly the reverse of luxurious ; it contained nothing but a rough table and a few benches, and old Peter, very drowsy after the deep potations in which Randolph had encouraged him, was sleeping soundly on the bare floor, rolled up in his blue cloth cloak, and with a fiddle-case by way of pillow. At the table, with both arms stretched across it, and his face hidden, sat Hugo. It was a long time since he had moved. Randolph half thought he must be asleep ; he sat watching him with an expression of mingled anxiety and contempt, and waited impatiently until he heard the clock in the hall strike twelve. At the sound a slight movement was apparent in Hugo's shoulders, and at length

he raised a face in which there were no traces of sleepiness, nothing but a look at once apprehensive and reluctant. He had promised to follow Randolph, but to what, or for what purpose, he had not the slightest idea.

‘Take off your boots,’ said the elder brother.

He obeyed, and followed Randolph through the door which led to the little staircase, a most steep and precipitous descent, down which they had to creep with the utmost caution. At length, twisting sharply to the right, they found themselves at the foot of the stair, and Randolph endeavoured to open the door which led into the passage beyond. Cautiously he turned the handle, turned it first one way, then the other; but all to no purpose. Beyond a doubt the door had been locked upon them. He swore a deep oath under his breath, and remounted the stairs. They led on higher than the gallery. He noiselessly crept up, and tried the upper

door. That too was securely locked. Evidently, while showing his hospitality and thoughtfulness for the musicians, Colonel Wharncliffe took good care not to trust them imprudently. The brothers stood motionless for a minute on the staircase. Upon Hugo's face there was written unmistakably an intense relief. Randolph, catching sight of this expression, flushed with a sudden anger, and, as if all at once gaining a solution for his difficulties, he cautiously crept back to the little room, and motioned to Hugo to follow him into the gallery. Then he turned and closed the half glass door, so that Peter should not be disturbed by their movements.

What in the world was he going to do? He walked to the front of the gallery and looked down over the broad wooden rail at the top of the bannisters. As far as he could judge in the dim light, the floor of the gallery was about nine or ten feet from the ground in the hall below, the

wooden railings not more than four feet high. The survey seemed to satisfy him.

‘You are a fair athlete,’ he said, in a low voice, turning to Hugo. ‘And, since my climbing days are ended, I must trust this matter to you.’

‘What matter?’

‘An affair of supreme concern both to ourselves and to the country.’

‘I would fain serve my country in other ways than by stealing at night through other men’s houses,’ said Hugo, bitterly.

‘Possibly you may live to do so, but at present your duty is to obey me,’ said Randolph, coldly. ‘Listen, for the fewer words we have the better. I know, on certain evidence, that in this house there are hid treasonable papers, papers that might be of infinite service if exposed. You will probably find them either in the room immediately opposite us—where we saw the conspirators last year—or you will find them in the chamber they call the south parlour, for which you must search.

Examine all receptacles ; be careful to overlook no secret drawers, and look well to see whether any of the panels are so arranged as to slide back.'

During all this time, Hugo had listened indeed, but his face had given evidence of the feelings that were struggling within him. What ! was he to do this—this shameful thing in the house of Joyce's father ? Bring ruin upon him ? Bring sorrow to her ? Never !

'I cannot do it,' he said, in the tone of one who is being tortured.

A flat refusal such as this from Hugo meant a great deal. Randolph saw at once that he must take strong measures.

A shade came over his dark face ; he quietly drew out a pistol, and cocked it.

'I am fond of you,' he said, calmly, perhaps failing to see the irony of his words, while he grasped his brother firmly in one hand, and held the pistol to his head with the other. 'I am fond of you, Hugo, but unless you swear to me that

you will do as I tell you,—by heaven! I'll blow out your brains this moment.'

'That would scarce serve your turn,' said Hugo, quietly. 'Murderers can scarce inherit a fair estate.'

'Fool!' cried Randolph. 'Do you think I could not make it appear that you had killed yourself? Ay, I would willingly swear you did; for, in truth, a refusal would be self-murder. Come, make your choice, and be quick. Save the honour of your family, save your country from ruin, or else go to instant death, and be by all men deemed a suicide.'

Hugo's breath came fast and hard; a frightful choice lay before him! And he was young, and life was so sweet; and to die thus by Randolph's own hand seemed intolerable! Good heavens! what would avail him?

To call to Peter for help would never do,—the whole household would be roused by a call loud enough to awaken the old musician after the amount of home-brewed

ale he had consumed. In despair, he glanced around for some means of escape, but escape there was none. The dim light from the lantern just sufficed to show the great emptiness of the hall below; the broad gallery, with its quaint old pictures and its massive balustrade, caged him hopelessly, and the face of his guardian, hard, fixed, grim as fate, confronted him pitilessly.

There was no help, no hope, nothing but death—and death at the hands of the man who was nearest him in all the world!

Inevitably the old tie, the bond of loyal obedience, held him fast in this extremity. Only once in his whole life had he disobeyed Randolph. Could he do so now?

Alas! contrasted with the misery, and the death, and the wrath of his guardian, imagination all too quickly painted a possible alternative. He might obey, and search, and, after all, there might be no papers. If papers were found they might not, after all, prove treasonable. They

might not implicate Joyce's father. The government might not think them worthy of notice. A loophole of escape seemed to lie in this direction. He wavered, looked up once again into the stern face above him, to see if any mercy lay hid there. But he knew only too well that what Randolph said, that he meant—knew that, his mind once set on any object, he would pursue it, cost what it might!

'The time waxes short,' said Randolph, sharply. 'Speak quickly and make your choice.'

Vaguely Hugo felt that if the circumstances had been only a little different he could have withstood longer, could even perhaps have chosen, as he knew he ought to have chosen, the death at the hands of his brother. But the horror of the semi-darkness, the utter helplessness, the loneliness and eeriness of that awful scene in the dead of night, the impossibility of self-defence, the very quietness of voice which was so imperatively necessary, and which

strangled the arguments that with free scope for speech he might have used, all this paralysed him.

‘I will,’—there was a pause, a slight struggle,—‘I will—obey you.’ The words were scarcely above his breath. Randolph required something more definite than this.

‘Swear that you will search thoroughly,’ he said, not lowering his pistol. ‘Swear it on—’ he felt for his sword, which had of course been left at Longbridge Hall with his own clothes, then looked round for some other sacred emblem. ‘Swear it on this cross.’

He pointed to a picture close beside them. It was of a nun, probably some member of his own family, painted years ago. Her face was young and fair, with sweet, calm eyes, and a mouth which looked as if it had learnt stern self-control in a hard school. About the face there was an indescribable expression of peace and content. In her hand she held

an open breviary, round her neck there hung a cross.

‘Swear it on this!’ reiterated Randolph, dragging him up to the picture.

And, ever with the pistol held close to his temple, Hugo hurried through the words which he loathed.

‘I swear that I will search thoroughly, and will bring you all I find, so help me God.’ As his right hand rested against the painted cross, he could have sworn that the nun looked at him with grief and reproach in her eyes. He turned away, his heart heavy as lead. But Randolph startled him by a sudden embrace.

‘God bless you, lad!’ he exclaimed. ‘You have relieved me from an awful task.’

There was genuine relief in his face; he would assuredly have blown his brother’s brains out had he disobeyed, but yet it would have cost him much to do it. For there were strange gleams of humanity about Randolph, for all his brutality and his tyrannical love of power.

Those few words restored a certain amount of animation to Hugo; all his anxiety now was to get through his hateful task speedily. At any other time he would have thought twice about climbing down such a break-neck place. Now, even in the semi-darkness, and with everything against him, he cared not a rush.

Before Randolph could offer another suggestion he was over the bannisters, the next moment his hands were on a level with the gallery floor, his feet feeling for the small foothold which might be hoped for on the capital of one of the wooden pillars at the entrance from the outer passage. Finding that, he cautiously lowered first one hand then the other, swung for one moment in mid air, then let himself drop, alighting with very little noise on the flags.

Well pleased with his promptitude, Randolph let down the lantern by a piece of cord, and from his vantage ground in the gallery, watched the dark figure steal-

ing noiselessly to the other end of the hall, and disappearing into the room where the meeting of the 5th of October had been held.

Once fairly set to work, Hugo moved with great swiftness and precision, he was true to his oath, moreover, and sought thoroughly; opened the book-case, opened the drawers of a cabinet, turned over papers, and briefly examined them. He found nothing, however, but cookery receipts, methods of clear starching, Latin exercises, and pencil-drawings, evidently the possessions of the daughters of the house. In the lowest drawer, which opened with a spring, he did indeed find a more questionable-looking collection of sheets, stitched together, closely written and tied with red tape, but on opening them he saw written in a round, clear handwriting,—‘Journal of Joyce and Evelyn Wharncliffe in the year of our Lord 1682—3. For the benefit of the descendants of the Randolph Wharncliffes.’

This statement so bewildered him, and he was so horrified at the idea of touching Joyce's private possessions, that he hastily tied the papers up again. Was it not here, in this very room, that he had seen her in ghostly array on that memorable October night? What if she should come now—come and find him prowling about the house like a thief! Oh, that he was through this despicable task! Quickened by the thought, he closed the drawer and rapidly surveyed the panels of the wall, while all the old portraits of the ancestors glared down at him, following him everywhere with their staring eyes. At the picture of Colonel Wharncliffe and at the picture of Joyce herself he actually dared not look, but there was one old man near the door, in the dress of a sheriff and an Elizabethan ruff, whose eyes he could not evade; he had a long, lean, ghostly-looking hand, pointing eternally downwards, and it seemed to Hugo's excited fancy that he indicated with scorn the place for which

he deemed this treacherous guest fit.

At length the search was complete. In this room there was nothing that would serve Randolph's purpose. Opening another door, Hugo found himself in the withdrawing-room, but here there was no question of finding papers ; the room was little used, and was stiffly set round with high-backed chairs covered with beautiful crewel-work on a black ground. There was not a single receptacle, however, which could by any possibility have concealed valuable papers.

Once more he emerged into the hall, searched a Japan cabinet which stood near the hearth, signed his want of success to Randolph, and went to seek the south parlour.

And here, alas ! success—the success he so little desired—awaited him. Just as he was leaving the room, he noticed a difference in some of the panels, and, setting down his lantern, he tried whether they would move ; to his dismay, three of the

panels yielded to his touch ; they were very heavy to raise, and they made much more noise than he desired, but a glimpse of books and papers within forced him to proceed. At length he had raised them some way, and, bringing the lantern close to the opening, he saw a deep recess, in which was stored on one side some legal documents, with which he did not meddle, on the other a pile of manuscripts, which upon examination proved, alas ! to have direct bearing upon the political condition of the country.

Here in very truth was evidence against Colonel Wharncliffe, for in those times to conceive of remedies against the Stuart tyranny was a matter of life and death, and people could not air their favourite theories, or proclaim themselves Republicans at their pleasure. Hugo could tell by the merest glance at the contents of the manuscripts that Colonel Wharncliffe would be placed in the gravest peril by their discovery.

With a stifled groan, he drew the papers forth, closed the panels, stole once more into the hall. Good God! why had he chosen life? Why—oh, why had he not taken the truly manly course, and refused to have any hand in this treachery, cost what it might?

Loathing himself, he tied the papers together with the cord which Randolph lowered, and saw them drawn up into the gallery. The cord came down again, this time for the lantern. He let this be drawn up too. Then he stood alone in the dark hall, feeling as though, had he but had the means, he would fain have hanged himself.

There was a strange beating sound in the hall beside him. How now! Had some one heard him? Should he be discovered? In an agony of shame he shrank back, but, after all, it was only the noise which the clock made before striking one. He had spent just one hour, but in that brief space he had committed a crime the

effects of which would last throughout his life.

‘Come up,’ said Randolph, in a whisper.
‘Why lose this time?’

And Hugo did begin the ascent, but either hurried too much or cared too little for his own safety; for suddenly, while with one hand he grasped the lower part of the gallery bannisters, his feet slid from their insecure resting-place, and he fell with a dull thud upon the white flagstones below.

‘You fool!’ that was the whisper which thrilled through his ears the instant he recovered his senses.

It stung him into prompt action; he stood up, but almost swooned, so frightful was the pain.

Randolph, seeing that he was seriously hurt, looked round in despair for any means of helping him; the lantern-cord was far too slender, and the gallery was bare of aught else. He rushed into the little room where honest Peter slept,

robbed him of his cloak, knotted it securely to his own, and hung them down through the railings. Then came a breathless interval. Hugo struggled gallantly, but every instant he grew more ominously pale. Randolph saw, with something bordering closely on remorse, that his face was convulsed with pain. Would the cloaks give way beneath the strain? Luckily Hugo was but light, and he helped himself manfully. It was with an intensity of relief that at last Randolph grasped the cold hands in his,—at last, with infinite pain, hauled him over into the gallery.

‘What have you done? where are you hurt?’ he asked, apprehensively.

But Hugo was past replying. He lay stretched on the floor of the gallery as one dead—and beside him lay the fatal papers.

CHAPTER II.

JOYCE'S JOURNAL.

You cannot barre love oute,
 Father, mother, and you alle;
 For, marke mee, love's a crafty boy,
 And his limbes are very smalle;
 He's lighter than the thistledoune,
 He's fleeter than the dove,
 His voice is like the nightingale;
 And oh! beware of love.

From the Seven Starrs of Witte, 1647.

May, 1683.—Evelyn and I have found but little to record in our journal all through the winter months. The newsletters brought us word that in London the persecution of dissenters waxed severer, a special effort having been made against them as the

time drew nigh to St. Thomas's Day. The churchwardens of most of the parishes named them to the Ecclesiastical Courts, and procured their excommunication. This my father saith was done that they might be incapacitated from voting at the election of common-councilmen to the City of London. Thus the Tory party will procure such a common-council as is fit for their turn, and, having already the mayor and most of the Court of Aldermen on their side, they will then be able to surrender to the King the charter of the City of London.

Since the 6th of October, however, no persecution reached us here at Mondisfield. But, after the sacking of the barn, no more meetings were held there. My father deemed it wiser for us to attend the parish church in the morning, and in the evening a few of those who have the courage to run the risk gather together in the hall, where there is a service held. We girls had first of all to make heavy red

curtains for the two great windows which till now had never had either curtain or shutter. Frances said she felt while making them like the Israelite women who wove the hangings for the Tabernacle. And it is certain that, without them, we should never have felt safe in meeting for worship with over the proscribed number. Even now, when the wind sighs on winter nights, or when the creepers beat against the pane, we start and tremble, and forget the prayer or the sermon, listening, heart in mouth, to the sounds without, and fearing another of those terrible incursions. This time I fear me there will be no gallant knight to warn us all in time and make escape possible. There is one John Hilton, who, they say, is very widely known as an informer against conventicles.

March proved a hot dry month, but in April we had naught but showers, from which even by Betty's birthday the roads had not recovered. However, the day itself—the 12th of May—was fine enough, and

the tenants were not to be kept from the yearly feast by a little mud. All went merrily, and we had a gayer time than usual, as befitted Betty's coming of age. But to me the chief interest lay in those two foreign musicians, about whom I feel now doubly certain there is some strange story.

The morning after Betty's birthday, Evelyn and I were roused by hearing Nurse and Margery talking together in the passage just beyond our room.

'Here's a pretty coil!' said Margery, my mother's maid, 'the young foreigner lad hath broke three of his ribs.

'Broke his ribs,' said Nurse, 'and how did he do that, pray? I suppose they got drinking and quarrelling last night. That is the end of feasting and dancing, and fiddling, and I pray God the master will be warned and have no more of such worldly doings.'

At this Evelyn made such an uproarious sign of disagreement, that we lost

the next sentence, but by-and-by we heard Margery say,

‘Ay, ay, it was old Peter told me about it, and he saith it was this morning he broke ’em, a-going into the gallery to fetch his lute, he slipped on the polished floor not being used to such. They have laid the poor chap in the gallery. Peter saith he heard naught till the one who played the viol shook him by the shoulder, and bid him rouse up and help, and then going to the gallery he saw the poor lad lie there looking as white as a clout.’

We knew well enough that this description would carry Nurse off, and that we should hear no more, for Nurse loves waiting on sick folk, and that one should look ‘as white as a clout’ gives him a firm hold on her sympathies.

Therefore we dressed as speedily as might be, and went down-stairs to hear more. All the household seemed in confusion, and everyone was either commiserating the poor German lutist, or scolding Tabitha

for having put so much bees-wax on the floor. At length my father came down and put an end to the talk by summoning us all to prayers, which he said must not be foregone, even for this unfortunate accident. We gathered just as usual in the hall, and my father read and prayed. We wondered much if the poor German listened up in his gallery, but none of us liked to look up there to see.

After breakfast my father went up to see what could be done, and a great talk arose as to whether he had best be carried to St. Edmondsbury where there is a surgeon, or whether it would be best for him to lie still, and let Lake the blacksmith see to him. Nurse said that to move him would be dangerous, and that Lake was skilful as a bone-setter, and would know what was amiss, and both Peter and the other German counselled him to lie where he was. But Karl—so they call him—almost put himself into a fever, they say, protesting in German that he must be

taken away, and not left behind alone. However, all was of no avail, his father fell in with our father's offer of hospitality, and Karl is to stay in the little room, off the gallery whither they bore him, not without causing him some pain. Lake the blacksmith said it would be impossible to carry him down those steep stairs without great risk, since in the fall he must have wounded his lungs, and so maybe it is well that he is quartered here, only it seems to make him so very unhappy. Father says we must do all we can to teach him English, that he may not feel so lonely. Nurse says he bore the pain of the moving without once flinching, and made no complaint of Lake's rough handling. But I think he must be well used to roughness, for his father seemed quite cruel to him, and though none could tell what they said to each other in that strange tongue, yet it was easy to see that even when they parted he was denying Karl's earnest entreaties,

and that very churlishly. All that day we girls were as busy as could be, helping the servants who had much to do in cleaning and rearranging the house after the feast, and also in waiting on poor Karl the lutist. They all seem glad to do what they can for him, however, and no one complains, for he asks for nothing, never murmurs, thanks even the little kitchen wench most courteously for the least service, and seems only anxious to give as little trouble as may be.

But Nurse says he is sorely troubled, and when she is out of sight she hears him sigh to himself, and at times groan. Then coming back to him she asks him if the pain has grown worse, and he just shakes his head, and turns his face to the wall, and makes as though he would sleep. Poor nurse feels quite anxious about him. She saith it is worse than having a babe sick, for they, though they cannot speak, can at least tell you what is amiss by their cries, but this poor Karl seems to

shut all things up within himself, and she can in no wise understand him.

The little room is so small that there is scarcely room for more than his bed and a table. So as soon as might be they moved him by day into the gallery, lifting him with great care that he might not be shaken. Then my father told us to go and see what we could do for him, and Evelyn and I bethought us of his lute, and asked him to teach us, which he did right willingly. So strange he looked with his short curly hair, and his face all pale and suffering, next to dear rosy Evelyn, with her laughing face and merry ways. I thought they would have made a good subject for a painter: Karl lying there on a mattress propped up with pillows, Evelyn kneeling beside him with the lute, her little plump brown fingers, showing so strangely beside his long, taper white ones, and the afternoon sun shining in upon the pictures of the gallery from one of the hall windows, and sending a

wide beam of light in betwixt the bannisters of the gallery with motes dancing endlessly in it. Watching them thus, and thinking how a painter would put them on his canvas, it suddenly came over me why I always fancied that I must have seen Karl before. From the first there was something familiar to me in his great broad forehead and dark grey eyes. And now I saw that he was extremely like the young gallant to whom we owe so much. He looks older and paler, and has a foreign air, but he is like him—so much like that were he not a wandering German minstrel I should deem that it must be he himself.

The next afternoon a strange thing happened. We were sitting beside him and had finished our lesson on the lute, and Karl, looking somewhat less miserable than usual, was telling us the German names for some of the things around, for a chair, a table, and so forth, when Evelyn suggested that he should look all round the hall and tell us the names of everything

he could see. We began with the pictures. The parrot picture, close to the gallery, the group of meat and fruit and eatables, that hangs over the hearth, and the man struggling in the waves with the burning ship in the distance, and the strange figures waiting to receive him on the shore. Karl seemed to interest himself in this picture, and we read him the motto painted on it,

‘More than ye rocks amiddys the raging seas,
Ye constant heart no danger dreddys nor fearys.’

The man’s face is earnest, and full of a strange power. You can almost see him struggling on, always grave, steadfast and untiring. At length we came to the picture of the little babe above the door of the north parlour.

Karl taught us the German for ‘little child,’ and then we to amuse him told him the tale of how the picture was saved from the great fire of London, and how it was the portrait of our kinsman, Hugo Wharn-

cliffe, brother to the Randolph Wharncliffe who would one day turn us out of our dear home. And we told him of our journal which we were writing for the 'descendants.' Now what happened to Karl at that precise moment I never could tell. Perchance it was merely that some movement hurt him suddenly, but a most terrible look came over his face, and we thought he would have swooned. Evelyn would have hurried away in search of Nurse, had he not signed to her to sit down again, and presently he seemed to recover himself, though he continued very pale all that afternoon. Nor can I forget the strange, doubtful, troubled look he gave me—as though he would fain speak but could not. We must indeed do all in our power to teach him English, but he doth not greatly care to learn, at least so it seems to me. 'Tis passing strange, for in his face is always the look of one who longs to say something, yet cannot.

My father is much interested in him

and wishes he could converse with him, but that of course is difficult, indeed well-nigh impossible. Moreover, Karl seems to shrink from him, almost to fear him, which is strange, seeing how kind and gentle our father is with him. What he seems to like best is that Nurse, and Evelyn and I should sit in the gallery in the afternoon and go on with our talking and reading just as though he were not there. I am sure he listens to the reading, he lies so still, with his face always towards us, and with a look of content upon it which is rarely there at other times.. We have read all through Mr. Bunyan's new book, 'The Holy War,' and also for the hundredth time, I should think, 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' besides several of Mr. Shakspeare's plays which my father thought would be sure to interest him, if he were able to understand them well enough, and this he seems to do.

15th of June, 1683.

No entries in our journal all these

weeks, but indeed we have been almost too busy to write, and when there have been spare moments, I scarce wished to set down what could hardly interest the 'descendants.' For indeed Karl has taken up all our thoughts. My mother says it is very natural that he should be less shy and uncomfortable with Nurse and with us children than with my father or herself. She says it is because he is of different station that he doth not feel comfortable in their presence, and that he looks upon me just as a child and so does not feel embarrassed by the difference in our birth. It is true all the world looks upon me as a child still, and I am glad it should be so, if to be counted as a grown woman would make Karl afraid of me.

I understand him less than ever, and I am not quite sure that he always does listen to the reading, as I thought he did. Three times of late, when I have looked up suddenly from the book to ask him some question, I have found his eyes fixed

so strangely on my face, and at one time, though I read the saddest part of the tale, there were his eyes shining with a sort of happy look that I never saw in eyes before. It is true it passed away very swiftly, leaving him as usual grave and troubled; but what business had he to be looking like that when Evelyn and Nurse were ready to weep over the death of the hero? I cannot get Karl out of my thoughts; he puzzles me greatly. But methinks it were perhaps wiser to write no more of him, and therefore I shall shut up the journal in our drawer in the north parlour until he has gone, which is like to be soon, since he is getting well.

CHAPTER III.

CONFESSION.

Mistake no more : I am not Licio,
 Nor a musician as I seem to be ;
 But one that scorns to live in this disguise.
Taming of the Shrew.

VERY strangely had that long month passed as far as Hugo was concerned. He alternated between a despair at the thought of the certain misery which must fall upon this peaceful household when Randolph had disclosed his secret and a feverish happiness caused by Joyce's presence. To lie there helplessly, able to watch the beautiful family life going on around him, and ever with the consciousness that his

own act would soon shatter this happy home, was almost more than he could endure. And yet, painful as it was, the sight of that home-life fascinated him. He had never known real family life; he had no conception of what a pure, genial home might be. The simple country customs, the common interests so keenly shared, the home loyalty, the loving pride in each other's successes, the pure laughter, the innocent jests, the girlish merriment, and the games into which no bitterness entered, all these were new to him. Again the religious element underlying all struck him greatly. The daily assembling of the household in the hall, the slow, solemn reading of the chapter from the Bible, the everyday language of the prayer offered up by Colonel Wharncliffe, and afterwards the repeating of a verse by every child, from Elizabeth, whose coming-of-age festival had been the cause of all his trouble, to little ten-year-old Evelyn.

Still more impressive were the Sunday

evening services, which he watched very curiously from his gallery.

He was now almost well, and was allowed to move about a little. If Randolph did not, as he had promised, either come for him or send for him, he was determined to leave Mondisfield in a few days' time, and try to make his way back to Sir Peregrine Blake's.

It was Sunday evening, the 17th of June. Hugo was sitting as usual in his musician's gallery, and looking down to the familiar hall, with its white-flagged floor, which had served him so churlishly, its carved oaken-settle and stately high-backed chairs set at intervals round the wall. At the table in the middle sat Colonel Wharncliffe, turning over the leaves of the great Bible. Benches were set for the few outsiders who ventured to the service, and for the servants, while, near the hearth, sat Mrs. Wharncliffe and her daughters, Joyce in her customary corner close to the tall clock. The even-

ings were now so light, that to have drawn the red curtains would but have excited greater notice, and the little congregation met in some fear, keeping ever a sentinel at the window to warn them of the approach of any danger. It seemed to Hugo that Joyce was the most nervous, and yet the most courageous of the party. He used to watch her very narrowly during those services. The alert, watchful, anxious look on her sweet, childish face touched him greatly.

The hour for the service had struck, and there was the customary sound under his gallery of the trampling of thick boots as the country folk made their way from the kitchen to the hall. But on this Sunday, instead of taking their places as usual, the nonconformists stood in a group, and Hurst the gardener went across to Colonel Wharncliffe.

‘If you please, sir,’ he said, quite loud enough for all present to hear. ‘If you please, sir, a special post has been through

the village, they say, and he has brought news of a plot to kill the King, which they do say was planned by the Whigs, sir.'

Colonel Wharncliffe looked up quickly.

'To kill the King?' he said, incredulously.

'Ay, sir,' replied Hurst; 'to kill the King and the duke too, sir.'

'Who heard the news at first hand?' asked the colonel, looking from one to another of the little group.

'I, sir,' said the village cobbler, stepping forward.

'And I, sir,' repeated another villager, younger and more impulsive-looking.

'What was the exact news?' said Colonel Wharncliffe; and Hugo from his gallery tried hard to read his grave face, but could not.

'The post brought word, sir, that all London was in alarm at the revealin' of a plot to kill the King, sir.'

'And the Duke of York,' added the cobbler.

‘Ay, and the duke too. The plot was revealed by two brothers, sir; at least, they say the younger was forced to it by his brother against his will.’

Hugo gasped, and clutched at the railings for support.

‘Did the post mention any names?’ said the colonel.

‘Ay, sir. Keeling was the name of the two brothers; and they say the eldest he was a salter in the City, and thought to take a leaf out of Dr. Oates’ book.’

At this Hugo breathed more freely. There had then been others reluctantly forced into this hateful work of playing the spy, and he, at any rate, was not responsible for the general revelation. But, alas, he was responsible for the danger that would now more than ever threaten Colonel Wharncliffe.

‘And when was the plot to have been carried out?’ said the colonel. ‘Said he naught of that?’

‘Ay, sir, that he did,’ said both, in a breath. ‘The King was to have been stopped on his way back from Newmarket, sir, in a narrow part of the high-way, nigh upon Mr. Rumbold’s house at Rye.’

‘And both were to have been killed, sir,’ said the cobbler, ‘both the King and his brother, and they do say it would have been done in the spring but for the fire at Newmarket, and the King’s going back sooner than expected.’

‘And some say that it was but put off till next Queen Elizabeth’s day,’ chimed in the younger man.

‘Said he aught of those arrested? Named he any well-known men?’

‘No names, sir, but he spoke of arrests that were being made, and said that warrants were being issued whereby all suspected of not favouring the King might be had up.’

Colonel Wharncliffe seemed to meditate for a few moments; then, looking up once

more, he thanked the men for their information, and said they would now proceed with the usual service.

The excitement soon died away, and a great calm fell upon the little assembly as Colonel Wharncliffe read of the three men who would not bow down to the great image which Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up, and of how, walking through the furnace itself, they found gain instead of loss. After that he prayed long and earnestly for all those who might be in danger through the news of this reported plot; in his prayer was nothing agitated or even anxious,—he was too calm and too good a man to be easily disturbed by evil tidings.

But in the gallery a storm raged. No calm could come to Hugo in his present state. Never even in all these long weeks of shame and misery, had he suffered so acutely as now. The very sight of the peaceful assembly down below seemed to accentuate his wretchedness. How little

they dreamed that this was their last Sunday! How little they dreamed that foes were even now seeking the colonel's life! And he had brought it all upon them,—he, the guest, the kinsman, he to whom all kindness and hospitality had been shown,—he had betrayed them.

Loathing himself, he looked back in a sort of amaze to think that his own act could have brought him into such a hateful position. Could it indeed be that he had ever had the chance of doing otherwise? It had not seemed in his power to escape from that first stealthy visit to Mondisfield. Had it really been in his power? Had he, through lack of some perception, some thought, some prompt assertion of principle, taken the irrevocable step which must lead to a whole chain of results of which he had never dreamed? And yet again and again there had been moments when he might have turned back. He might have disobeyed Randolph, and refused to follow him from Longbridge

Hall on an expedition which from the first aroused his suspicions. He might have died the death of a martyr in that very gallery, and purchased eternal honour instead of, as now, eternal shame. And now he lay in this furnace of pain, the fiery furnace which he had kindled for himself, and he knew that hell itself could contain nothing more frightful than this looking back on the past with the full consciousness of his failure, and the full consciousness of what that fault of his was bringing upon others. He was in the cleansing fires, and those in the hall below were in the heavenly calm of communion with the Unseen, wrapping them round from all the cares and troubles of the outer world.

The sight of them took him back to that Sunday morning,—a lifetime ago it felt to him now,—when he had seen them in the barn. The old minister had spoken words which he had never forgotten, perhaps because at the time he had so little under-

stood them. 'Men can rise above the circumstances in which they are placed.' He had not risen ; he had been dragged down, was even now being dragged irresistibly down by Randolph's stronger will. But 'men *can* rise.' That was for him in very truth a gospel. From the perception of all that was involved in that 'can' he was not long in passing to the 'I will.' And above the grave Puritan discourse, above the devils' voices which mocked him with his own weakness, and with the dangers of the way, there floated in to him the anthem which he had heard from his childhood at the Temple Church—'I will arise and go to my Father.'

Then slowly and by degrees his duty began to dawn upon him. The first step in the upward progress taken revealed the second. It was a hard one. Nevertheless, he took it resolutely, manfully. By this time the congregation were beginning to disperse. Hugo bent forward, caught Joyce's eye, and deliberately signed to her

to come up to the gallery. Then, raising himself, he made his way with some difficulty into the little room beyond, and there awaited her.

She came in quickly, with an exclamation of surprise and a smile of eager congratulation.

‘Why, Karl! have you walked in here? ’Tis the first time you have walked alone!’

He was standing beside the window which looked out at the back of the house and right down the oak avenue, where he had last walked with Randolph and Peter.

‘The first time you have walked alone!’ Her words seemed to him to bear a deeper meaning than she had intended; he smiled a very little, even in the midst of his pain.

But Joyce was quick at reading faces, and she saw at once that he was suffering.

‘You are worse, Karl. What is the matter?’ she said, a sudden terror taking possession of her as the pain in his face deepened.

‘I begged you to come,’ he began,

speaking quickly and yet forcibly; 'I desired to see you, that I might confess a grave wrong which I fear will injure your father.'

'Karl!' she exclaimed, trembling, 'you speak English? You knew it all the time?'

'Call me not Karl!' he said, speaking with an effort. 'That name must be for ever hateful to me. Joyce, cousin Joyce! I am no musician, no German, I am your miserable kinsman, Hugo Wharncliffe.'

'You are Hugo Wharncliffe!' she repeated, with a look of utter bewilderment.

'Ay; would to heaven I were not!' he said, passionately. 'Would to heaven I were not!'

He turned away, trying to hide from her the rush of shame and anguish that overwhelmed him.

There was a long silence. Presently her voice fell upon his ear. She spoke very gravely, very gently, and there was in her tone a curious touch of sadness, as

though she knew that behind this strange confession there lay some grievous wrong.

‘Cousin Hugo,’—she just touched his arm—‘cousin Hugo, you must sit down, or you will overtire yourself.’

He obeyed her, being, in fact, scarcely able to stand longer.

Again there was silence. At last Joyce spoke.

‘Why did you seek to injure my father?’ she said, struggling hard to repress the indignation that raged within her.

‘God knows I did not seek to injure him,’ said Hugo.

‘Ah!’—a light broke upon her—‘it was, then, that other, the one whom we called your father! Ah! I knew—I knew from the first that he was hard and bad and cruel. And I might have known that you would not have done it.’

‘Nay,’ he said, ‘nay, blame him not. If his was the brain to conceive, mine was the arm to execute. Joyce, Joyce, have pity on me! Hate me not; hate the

crime, but for heaven's sake do not hate me !'

'How could I hate you ?' she exclaimed.
'I hate you ?—I ?'

Her sweet eyes met his fully ; it was all he could do to strangle the passionate words of love which rose to his lips. But this was no fit moment to speak ; with an effort which seemed to rend his very heart, he turned from thoughts of Joyce and of love, to the torturing thought of his crime, and the tardy reparation for which he must strive.

'Listen to me,' he said, almost sternly.
'My brother brought me to this house last October. We overlooked a meeting which was being held here. That assured him of one bit of evidence against your father. He brought me again a month since, to search for surer evidence still. We found ourselves locked into this part of the house. The only way to search the premises was to climb over the gallery, and so into the hall. He bade me do it

—I refused. Then he threatened to shoot me on the spot, and—I yielded.'

His voice sank, he writhed under the remembrance, writhed under the torture of confessing his weakness to Joyce.

'And you found something?' said the girl.

'Ay, I found papers which I fear will make it go hard with your father. The greater number my brother bore away with him. But one book of manuscripts was too large for him to carry, and he left it with me till his return.'

He unlocked the case belonging to his lute and showed her a book secreted there.

'This at least I can restore,' he said, 'this confession I can at least make: your father may yet find safety in flight, and, by all that is holy, I swear that I will never give evidence against him!'

Joyce did not in the least realise all that this promise would involve, but there was that in Hugo's manner which made the tears rush to her eyes.

‘And you would have me bear these tidings to my father?’ she said, gently.

He signed an assent and turned away, too miserable to speak another word.

Joyce stood still for a minute thinking.

‘Cousin Hugo,’ she said, presently, ‘tell me one thing: I think it must have been you who fought that bad man last October outside the park; I think—I feel sure it was you who warned us that Sunday in the barn. Is it not so?’

‘God bless you for remembering!’ he exclaimed, passionately. And turning, he hastily raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

‘Be not too miserable,’ she said; ‘be glad at least in this: that this has happened with our father rather than with one of harder nature. Oh! he will be very good to you, he will bear no malice.’

And with this comfort she left the room, while Hugo flung himself down on the bed, well aware that the kinsman’s forgiveness would be worse to bear than blows.

He waited long in an agony of shame and remorse. The room was now almost dark, and in the soft grey of the midsummer sky he could see stars shining out one by one. Presently the door at the foot of the staircase was opened, and some one came up bearing a lamp. He listened apprehensively. It was a man's tread, it was doubtless Colonel Wharncliffe. Burying his face in the pillow, he waited motionless while the steps drew nearer and nearer. Could he now have felt the cold muzzle of Randolph's pistol once more at his head, he would have welcomed it and courted death.

He heard his kinsman enter and close the door behind him, then he also closed the half-glass door which led into the gallery, then he set down his lamp and drew a chair to the bedside.

Still Hugo did not move a muscle.

'My daughter Joyce has delivered your message to me,' he began, in his grave voice.

A sort of shudder passed through the form on the bed.

‘My poor lad,’ continued the colonel, ‘I am right grieved for you. Your mother, a noble lady whom I loved well, would have been sore at heart could she have foreseen this day.’

An uncontrollable sob escaped Hugo. Such a reference at such a time was almost more than he could endure.

‘Do not for one moment think that I blame you,’ said the colonel. ‘God forbid that I should judge you in aught. And indeed I can well perceive how cruelly your circumstances made for your fall. I blame you not, I will never blame you.’

‘Kill me not with kindness!’ said Hugo, starting up and revealing his haggard, agitated face. ‘Rather blame me, for I am to be blamed.’

‘Nay,’ said the colonel, gravely. ‘Christ permitteth us not to rebuke those who, having offended against us, have repented. For such there must be naught but for-

giveness. Why, my poor lad, who would be benefited by blame or rebuke? Already you know full well all that your wrongdoing will bring to pass. What need of words of mine?’

For a few moments there was silence. Hugo, keenly conscious of the contrast between this man’s noble generosity and his own treachery, humbled to the dust by the perception of his own meanness, was yet irresistibly attracted to his kinsman. We hate those whom we injure just so long as we do not repent of the injury. But the forgiver by his very divineness attracts.

‘If you will only conceal yourself,’ began Hugo, eagerly. ‘There is yet one thing that I can do, to make some sort of reparation, though that indeed is too great a word, for such slight amends.’

‘Joyce mentioned to me something of the sort. She says that you propose not to give evidence against me.’

‘That is the least I can do,’ said Hugo, quickly.

‘I could not let you make such a sacrifice,’ said the colonel. ‘You are very young, you hardly realise what it would involve.’

‘Sir,’ said Hugo, ‘sacrifice is hardly a suitable word as between yourself and me. Torture me not by refusing to accept the only amends in my power. It is no question of sacrifice, but of plain duty.’

‘Nobly spoken,’ said the colonel. ‘Yet remember that this course will bring you into certain trouble. You will incur imprisonment, and our prisons are such hells on earth that I shrink from the thought of such a thing for you.’

‘Think not of me!’ broke in Hugo, passionately. ‘Why will you speak of naught else? I am outside the question altogether. Think of your own safety, of your wife, of your children. Escape or hide while there is yet time.’

‘You speak your innermost heart in all truth?’ questioned the colonel.

‘Yes, a thousand times over,’ said Hugo.

'Think of them, and let me bear the natural consequences of what I have done. Bring hither a Bible and I will swear to you never to breathe aught against you.'

'Nay,' said the colonel, 'an oath is no more sacred than a promise. I will trust your word. I hold not in all things with the Quakers, but yet it seems to me that the reckless swearing of these days imports an element of profaneness even into an oath taken with due solemnity. I will trust your word.'

'Then,' said Hugo, firmly, 'I promise that I will never give evidence against you. I thank you for your trust.'

He fell back again on the bed, exhausted by all that he had passed through, but yet feeling already a lessening of the intolerable load which had for so long weighed upon him.

They fell to talking of the news from London, and the colonel explained to Hugo his views, which were almost identical with those of Sydney. Of the plot to

murder the King and the duke he had heard not a single word, and, since plots were in those times so often the mere fabrication of the enemies of the accused, he was inclined to discredit it altogether.

The two talked far into the night, Hugo telling his kinsman of his acquaintance with Colonel Sydney, of his stay at Penshurst, of his London life, and of his relations towards his brother. The colonel grew more and more interested in a character which seemed to him so full of promise, and so cruelly fettered by its surroundings. A youth who had kept himself from all grossness in the court of King Charles was indeed almost a phenomenon. And there was no mistaking Hugo's genuine purity of heart and life.

Colonel Wharncliffe was in truth almost diverted from the thought of his own peril by the perception of the great difficulties which lay before this son of his old friend. For himself, he was an old soldier, and had lived through many dan-

gers. Moreover, he was constitutionally brave. It is not always easy, however, for brave people to be brave for others, and he shrank not a little from the thought of all the suffering which lay before his young kinsman, who after all was more sinned against than sinning.

‘I have warned the village cobbler to let me know at once should any suspicious-looking party arrive in the village. Therefore, if your brother, with any officer capable of making an arrest, arrives by that road, we shall be warned in time.’

‘You will not make your escape at once?’ asked Hugo.

‘There is no need,’ said the colonel. ‘I have a sure hiding-place close at hand. Precisely where it is I will not inform you, in order that, if put to the proof, you may with truth deny all knowledge of my movements. And now I will bid you good-night; had I but found before that you were my kinsman, you should

have had the guest-chamber. After all, though, I doubt whether we could have safely moved you.'

CHAPTER IV.

REPARATION.

Love give me strength,
And strength shall help afford.

Romeo and Juliet.

LEFT once more to himself, Hugo, still greatly agitated by all he had suffered that evening, found sleep impossible. True, even in the midst of his shame and perplexity, he already felt something of the relief of confession, but with the relief there was a bewildering consciousness that this was only a brief pause, a sort of breathing space, betwixt his confession and the certain results of his wrong-doing. Another day, a few hours, and he might be a prisoner, with another man's life

under the protection of his strength of purpose. A few hours, and he might be borne away from Mondisfield for ever! A few hours, and he might have looked his last on Joyce! No wonder that sleep refused to come to his excited brain. Wearily he tossed to and fro on his pallet bed, weighing the probabilities of the future, alternating between wild hopes and ghastly fears, and, worse than all, haunted by the thought that Randolph's will might a second time overpower his, a second time make him a traitor to his conscience. Then he wandered back again to thoughts of Algernon Sydney, and he wondered whether it would be possible to write to him, tell him the whole truth, and ask his advice. Often in these wretched weeks of waiting he had pondered the feasibility of such a plan, but had always been debarred by the impossibility of not writing such a letter as would betray his real character, and prove him not to be Karl, the German lutist.

And now, alas! another obstacle had arisen. He might write a letter in his own character, but to do so would perchance involve Colonel Sydney in his disgrace. At all costs, he must not risk that, he must die in silence rather than bring him into danger. If indeed he were not already in danger, as was only too probable.

That he should escape when all the Whigs were suspected, that he should be allowed fair play when there was a chance of seizing him, was indeed a consummation devoutly to be wished, but not in the least to be expected. A plot to murder the King and the duke! Why, Algernon Sydney would be one of the first to be arrested. His foes would be so thankful for any excuse of getting him out of the way. This dangerous man, this avowed Republican, whose murder had again and again been attempted by the court party, who was more feared than anybody, because 'it was known he could not be

corrupted;’* that, while others might be bought over to the royal interests, Sydney, sternly incorruptible, would remain for ever true to his own principles.

Hugo could only hope that he might retire to France, and find again safety in exile; but the weary sense of his own helplessness, and the fears which he knew were well-founded, weighed heavily on his heart, while again and again he recollected the grim foreboding of coming evil which had oppressed him at their last parting.

Sydney’s words rang in his ears, but they rang now like a death-knell; though at the time they had been cheerfully spoken.

‘We shall meet again in London!’

Ay, in London. But where?

It was not until sunrise that sleep came to him, stilling for a time the weary train of apprehensive thoughts. The household

* See Sydney’s ‘Apology.’ The remark was made by one of his friends, and given in explanation of the great hostility of the court party.

was soon after astir, the dairymaid churning, the cow-boy coming in with the morning milk, the gardener mowing the bowling-green, and whistling as he sharpened his scythe. But Hugo was sleeping too soundly to be disturbed; he did not even hear the steps which some time later ascended the little staircase; he did not hear his door open, or know that one stood beside his bed, looking down at him sadly, and with fatherly pity.

Colonel Wharncliffe was obliged to rouse him.

He started up at the sound of his name, and the face so peaceful in sleep instantly resumed its expression of suffering, and of strained anxiety.

‘I came to bid you farewell,’ said the colonel. ‘It is as we feared, the cobbler has brought me word that a stranger has arrived this morning at the village inn, and with him Sir Peregrine Blake and two constables, with half-a-dozen men in attendance. They have stopped at the inn,

and will breakfast there before proceeding.'

'Escape, then—escape while there is time!' said Hugo, eagerly. 'Why linger here with me?'

'I would have you escape with me,' said the colonel. 'Share my hiding-place. Even were we found, your fate could scarcely be worse than it will be now.'

'And who would meet my brother?' said Hugo. 'Who would bear the brunt of the inquiries? who would suffer from his wrath? Your wife, perhaps your daughters. Ah! you look incredulous, but you do not know my brother.'

'In that case, I will stay with them myself,' said the colonel, composedly.

'No,' broke in Hugo, passionately, 'you must not, you shall not stay. I beg you—I implore you—let me make the only amends in my power. Have I not given you my word? Would you have me go back from it?'

'My poor lad, I believe that you are indeed as brave and as true—ay, and as

faithful to me as my own son might have been. But look you, this will be a hard matter, and you are but young—very young.'

'Not too young to suffer,' said Hugo, resolutely, 'or to hold my tongue. Sir, I thank you for your kindness, but I cannot and will not escape.'

'Then,' said the colonel, solemnly, 'may the Almighty strengthen you and bless you. Farewell, my son.'

He wrung his hand and turned away.

It was not till he had been gone some time that Hugo recollected the manuscript book, which, in all the haste and confusion, had been left behind in his lute-case. He took it forth, hastily re-arranged his dress, then, giving one last look round the little room in which he had undergone so much, he made his way, for the first time since his accident, down the steep stairs, and into the hall.

The first person he met was Joyce.

She was looking very pale and anxious.

The thought that he had brought this suffering upon her was almost more than he could endure ; but it was no time to think of personal pain, or even of self-reproach. Stifling the words of regret and shame which rose to his lips, he abruptly opened the subject that was of real importance.

‘Cousin Joyce,’ he said, ‘your father bore not with him this book of treatises. It must be hidden right speedily, or we shall be undone.’

She mechanically held out her hand for it, and motioned to him to sit down in one of the high-backed chairs.

‘You should not have walked down alone, Cousin Hugo ; you look very ill. But oh, tell me—tell me quick where to hide this. I can think of naught this morning, my head is so weary.’

‘Could you not burn it?’ said Hugo.

‘There is but the kitchen fire, and the maids are in the kitchen and would see all.’

‘Then tie a stone to it and fling it in

the moat,' he said, decidedly. 'And make all possible speed. Oh, if I only had the use of my limbs!' He broke off in uncontrollable impatience, chafed almost beyond endurance at feeling that he, the one available man, the sole protector of the household, was invalided.

'Vex not yourself,' said Joyce, soothingly; 'I will indeed make haste. See, I will not linger one moment.'

She ran swiftly out of the hall, found a weight and a cord, tied the book securely, and hurried out bare-headed from the back door. The morning was fine, the hot midsummer sun beat full down upon her as she ran, glancing apprehensively across the water into the park to see if any witnesses were in sight. All was still and peaceful, however, cruelly peaceful it seemed to Joyce. How could the birds sing so distractingly, how could the cattle graze with such provoking calmness, how could all nature bear so composed a face when her father lay concealed within his own house,

deeming himself secure indeed, but yet running no small risk of discovery should a thorough search of the premises be instituted? And Hugo! Come what might he must suffer; come what might he must be borne away by the cruel brother who had already once threatened to shoot him, and who was doubtless quite capable of doing the deed! Joyce's heart felt fit to break as she thought of it, the tears blinded her eyes, but she dashed them away that she might see how best to drop the precious book. For now she stood on the little wooden bridge, and had not Hugo bade her be quick? One more hurried glance around, then she threw the book over the rail and watched it splash down into the water below. In a dull, mechanical sort of way she watched the widening circles in the water as they grew fainter and fainter. Presently all was calm once more, and the book was securely buried in its watery grave. But yet something had happened which made Joyce clutch at the

railing of the bridge and turn deathly white. For as the circles died away upon the water a faint, monotonous sound fell upon her ear; she scarcely knew at first whether it might not be the beating of her own heart. She paused and listened once more. Nearer and nearer that dreaded sound was fast approaching—‘One-two, one-two, one-two!’ Horses’ hoofs beyond a doubt! The horsemen who were coming to seek her father’s ruin; the horsemen who would assuredly bear Hugo away.

Well, at least she would tell him the book was safe, at least she would bid him farewell.

Breathlessly she hurried to the hall. Hugo was still leaning back in the chair beside the hearth where she had left him.

‘Cousin Hugo,’ she exclaimed, ‘it is safe, but, oh, I hear the sound of horsemen in the distance!’

Her face was blanched with fear.

‘Will you not trust me?’ he said, quiet-

ly. 'I would sooner die than betray your father.'

'Trust you!' she cried. 'Ay, I would trust you before all the world. But, oh! Cousin Hugo, it is for you that I fear. What may they not do to you?'

'I cannot tell,' he replied, 'I do not wish to think. It is enough for me if I can by silence shelter you. Sweet cousin, do not weep; your tears pain me far more than can their blows.'

Betty and Damaris joined them ere more could be said, and Joyce dried her eyes and crossed the hall to look forth from the window.

'They come!' she cried, after a minute's silence, during which Hugo had been trying to understand how the other girls regarded him, whether their trust in his honour was as complete as Joyce's. There was a stir and a commotion all through the house; the members of the family gathered together in the hall, some looked apprehensively at the approaching horse-

men, some looked at the slight boyish figure in the chair by the hearth, upon whom their fate depended. Poor Mrs. Wharncliffe sighed as she looked. He was so young, so little able to resist a stronger will. It seemed indeed to her that her husband had trusted to a broken reed in trusting to his young kinsman's honour. He might mean well enough, but how could he cope with the guardian who was double his age, and who had three times his force of character?

She had yet to learn that character is not ready-made, but is created bit by bit, and day by day.

The horsemen drew nearer, crossed the draw-bridge, rode up to the door, and dismounted. There was a buzz of conversation without, but within there reigned an unbroken silence. All eyes were turned now upon Hugo. He still leaned back in the chair. Would he never move? Would he never speak? Was this their protector?

This the man upon whom depended their whole future!

A thundering knock at the hall-door brought Dennis the man to open it.

'Is Colonel Wharncliffe within?' asked Sir Peregrine Blake.

'He is away from home, sir,' replied the man, composedly.

The magistrate swore a deep oath. But another voice interrupted him impatiently.

'Away from home! I don't believe a word of it. Here, sirrah! let me enter. The traitor is in hiding somewhere. Let us by, you villain! I tell you we have a warrant for his arrest. Where is the young German lad?'

Dennis knew that to resist the entrance of the magistrate and the attendants was useless; he stood aside and they made their way into the hall.

'Where is Karl, the lutist?' reiterated Randolph, impatiently.

No one replied, but Hugo slowly raised himself, and walked forward a few paces.

‘There is no one of that name present,’ he said, quietly. ‘I have dropped all disguise, Randolph; our kinsfolk know my name.’

Randolph, taking no notice of anyone else, rushed straight up to his brother, seized him by the collar and shook him much as a cat shakes a mouse preparatory to killing it.

‘What do you mean?’ he said, through his teeth.

Hugo made no reply.

‘What do you mean?’ repeated Randolph. ‘Have you warned that traitor?’

‘I confessed to Colonel Wharncliffe that I had played the spy in his house,’ said Hugo, in a low voice.

‘You warned him, knowing that to do so would ruin my plans?’

‘I warned him knowing that it was right to do so.’

‘Then take that for your reward!’

And he dealt him a blow which made him measure his length on the flag-stones.

There was a sort of subdued exclamation in the group of spectators. The daughters of the house—a little group of grey gowns and broad white collars, contrasting strangely with the bright colours worn by the invading body—shrank nearer to their mother, who stood before them like a hen sheltering her chickens. She was very pale, and there was no mistaking the anxiety in her face, but to insult her calm dignity would have been impossible. Randolph took off his hat as he turned to her, and bowed slightly

‘Madam,’ he said, ‘this gentleman,’ he indicated an officer who stood beside Sir Peregrine, ‘bears a warrant for Colonel Wharncliffe’s arrest. He is charged with complicity in the plot to kill His Majesty and the Duke of York.’

‘Whosoever charges him with such a crime, charges him falsely,’ she said, with a calm smile.

‘Madam,’ continued Randolph, ‘your husband is charged upon certain evidence; I myself deposed to his disaffection towards the Government, his own papers proved the like, and my brother will confirm all and render the evidence irrefutable.’

‘Never!’ exclaimed Hugo, emphatically.

He was on his feet again. His eyes flashed, as even dreamy grey eyes can flash upon occasion. He looked full at Randolph as though daring him to do his worst.

Randolph returned his gaze with one of prolonged inquiring scrutiny. This sudden development of resolution, of courage, of opposition surprised him not a little. It upset all his calculations.

‘More of that anon,’ he remarked, after a pause. Then, turning to Mrs. Wharncliffe, ‘I must trouble you, madam, to tell us where your husband is.’

‘My husband is absent,’ she answered,

quietly. 'And I can give you no information as to his movements.'

Randolph stepped across to the officer, and they consulted together for a minute or two. Then the officer crossed the hall.

'It will be our duty, madam, to search the premises,' he said, 'and in the meantime the household will remain here in view of two of my men.'

She bowed assent, and with great dignity moved to one of the carved arm-chairs beside the hearth. The girls followed her, and stood around her chair. Hugo went back to his old quarters on the other side of the hearth, while at the further end of the hall Sir Peregrine Blake and Randolph sat talking together over the tankards of ale for which they had not scrupled to ask. The two constables paced up and down keeping guard, and wishing themselves with their fellows, who were enjoying a far more exciting game of hide-and-seek.

Endless seemed the waiting-time to all concerned, but more especially to those

who waited beside the hearth. The secret hiding-place was indeed hard to find, but if by evil chance they were to come across it!

The suspense was a slow agony. It required all Mrs. Wharncliffe's well-bred self-control to prevent her from starting as the steps of the searchers were heard overhead, here, there, and everywhere, about the rambling old house. She heard every sound, every exclamation, every door which was opened or shut. The whole power of her being seemed to have concentrated itself into the sense of hearing. But for all that she betrayed no emotion, only sat very still and held little Evelyn's hand fast.

At length came the longed-for relief! The party returned, confessing that they had made a thorough search both of the house and the premises, and that no trace of the colonel was to be found. Little Evelyn could not restrain a relieved smile;

the others, taking their cue from their mother, maintained a stately indifference of expression.

But once again poor Mrs. Wharncliffe trembled as she glanced across to the other side of the hearth. That poor youth who looked already so weary, so worn out, —in his strength, in his steadfastness lay their hope for the future! True, he had made just now a gallant resistance. But the effort seemed to have exhausted his strength. He had collapsed entirely. The fire had gone out of his eyes, the manliness had gone from his bearing; he watched fixedly the brother who had hitherto exercised such a strange influence over him. Oh, would the old fascination prove too strong for him? would his resolution fail?

She was recalled from her own thoughts by a stormy altercation at the other end of the hall.

‘Not found him?’ exclaimed Randolph.

‘Idiots! I tell you he shall be found! I’ll get the truth out of that boy; bring him forward!’

The two constables moved towards Hugo, but he waved them back, and himself walked steadily towards his brother, who, following Sir Peregrine, had approached the table in the middle of the hall.

‘Now, lad,’ said Sir Peregrine, not unkindly, ‘I’ve long ago forgiven you the wound you gave me, and it is as a friend that I counsel you to obey your brother, and reveal all that you know about this confounded colonel. What is his fate to you? Your duty to your brother, your duty to your Sovereign, alike demand that you shall disclose this matter.’

‘Sir,’ said Hugo, respectfully, ‘you demand what is impossible.’

‘Impossible! What nonsense is this? Impossible! How impossible?’

‘Impossible, sir, because it is against my conscience.’

Sir Peregrine laughed aloud.

‘By the powers, if that isn’t the same thing he said before our duel! Conscience—I know nothing of conscience! All I know is that you owe duty to your King and to your brother, and that you owe naught to this traitor.’

‘Pardon me, sir,’ said Hugo, ‘there is one thing we owe to all men, whether they be friends or foes,—we owe them justice.’

‘We waste time bandying words,’ said Sir Peregrine, impatiently. ‘It would be much more to the purpose, lad, if you told us when you last saw Colonel Wharncliffe.’

‘More to your purpose, sir,’ said Hugo, quietly, ‘but not to mine.’

‘Leave him to me, Blake,’ said Randolph, interposing. ‘Why attempt to argue with him? I’ll find more convincing arguments than words.’

He laid a firm hand on Hugo’s shoulder, and, fixing his eyes on him, said, in a low, yet strangely forceful voice,

‘Just now, Hugo, you said that you

would never give evidence against Colonel Wharncliffe. Do you know that such a refusal will render you guilty of misprision of treason ?’

‘I know that I should be charged with misprision,’ he replied.

‘You will be charged, and most assuredly found guilty. And the penalty of misprision of treason is imprisonment for life.’

Hugo made a sign of assent, but did not speak.

‘Am I to understand that you will be such a fool as to incur this in order to shelter the foe of your own family ?’

‘I will suffer it in order to make amends for an act of injustice,’ said Hugo, firmly.

‘I am loth to take you at your word,’ said Randolph, his face clouding. ‘Once more I will give you a chance. Do you refuse to obey me in this matter ?’

‘Ay, sir, I respectfully refuse.’

‘You will not give evidence against this man ?’

A shudder ran through the watchers by

the hearth. The elder brother had spoken this last appeal more in sorrow than in anger; there was deep regret, deep appeal in his tone. For an instant it seemed that Hugo wavered. Was there no compromise that he could make? Must he definitely and for ever sever himself from Randolph? Must he sacrifice his whole life? The struggle was but momentary, however. His eye kindled, a great calmness overspread his face.

‘I will *never* witness against him, so help me God!’

The words seemed to vibrate through the little assembly. They had not been spoken loudly, yet they fell upon the ears of all present with a curious power.

Their effect upon Randolph was extraordinary. In an instant they changed him from the elder brother, regretfully showing the effect of this course of action, to the stern, almost cruel avenger.

‘Well, Sir Peregrine,’ he said, with a laugh, ‘bring out your ink-horn and make

out a warrant for the committal of this young rebel.'

Sir Peregrine obeyed, muttering oaths and ejaculations, which were not complimentary to the rebel in question.

Hugo scarcely heeded them, however. In a dazed way he watched the magistrate writing slowly and laboriously the order which was to deprive him of his freedom. It is not in the first moments that we realise all the meaning of future evil, even when we have voluntarily embraced that evil. There is a time of numbness, a time of semi-paralysis, which almost invariably interposes itself between the falling of the blow and the sharpest of the suffering.

There was no lack of evidence that Hugo had in fact concealed Colonel Wharncliffe's supposed treason. He had made away with the book of manuscripts, had warned him of the danger in which he stood. To obtain the signatures for his committal was but the work of a few minutes.

But Randolph had not yet done with

him. Irritated almost beyond endurance by the calmness of his bearing, he once more laid forcible hands on him.

‘There is more to be had out of this fellow yet, Blake. He has ruined his own chances, but I’ll yet have some sort of clue to the colonel’s hiding-place from him. Find that traitor I will. Here, sirrah, bring me my riding-whip.’

Mrs. Wharncliffe stepped forward with an eager appeal.

‘Sir, I implore you do him no violence.’

But there she checked herself, for Hugo gave her a warning look; she knew that he meant his tormentors to deem by his silence that with him only lay the secret of the colonel’s movements. Had the safety of any but her husband depended on her silence, however, she could not have let her guest suffer. But she thought of her husband, and went back to the hearth. Evelyn and Damaris were crying, Betty trying to comfort them; Frances looked pale and anxious, Robina excited, while

Joyce stood, her hands locked tightly together, her eyes dilated, and a burning spot of colour in her cheeks.

‘Joyce, my love Joyce,’ said her mother, softly.

The girl turned, caught at the hand stretched out to her, and crouched down beside her mother with her face hidden. She did not cry, but she trembled from head to foot. And yet all the time she was making a desperate effort to still herself, for although to listen was torture, she yet longed to hear whether Hugo spoke or not.

‘When did you confess this to the colonel, and when did you last see him?’ asked the elder brother. ‘Mark me well, I will flog you till you answer me.’

‘Then you may flog till doomsday,’ was Hugo’s reply.

And after that he never spoke; not a sound was heard in the hall save the sound of the heavy leathern throng as it descended, and the unanswered questions, reiterated from time to time.

To Joyce it seemed like an eternity. At length the dreadful monotony was broken by an ejaculation from Sir Peregrine Blake. Floggings were very common in those days—masters constantly flogged their servants, and parents their sons. But they did it in moderation, and had some regard to the consequences. In his wrath Randolph seemed forgetful of these. He could only take in the one maddening thought, that his brother, who had been his obedient tool, was now withholding the one thing which he longed to know.

‘Odds-fish, man! you’ll kill the lad,’ exclaimed the magistrate. ‘Be warned by me, and stop, for it would be an awkward thing for a magistrate to have countenanced you.’

Then, as Randolph took no heed, the magistrate beckoned to the chief constable.

‘Take the prisoner in charge, Mr. Constable,’ he said. ‘He is your property now, and we must put a stop to this game.’

The man, who had very reluctantly witnessed the scene, promptly stepped forward, and intimated to Randolph that the prisoner must be removed. Randolph in a violent passion poured forth a torrent of oaths, but they fell off the constable like water off a duck's back—he quietly motioned to his men to assist him, and together they bore off Hugo's inanimate form to the north parlour.

One of Sir Peregrine Blake's servants hurried forward as they made their way from the hall.

'The young gentleman's clothes, sir, which we brought from Longbridge? Shall I bear them to him?'

'Ay, ay,' said Sir Peregrine, 'he'd best go to gaol in his own character, not as a strolling musician. Ay, Launce, bear them after him, and bid him make haste and don them.'

CHAPTER V.

‘IT IS YOUR LOVE I WANT.’

Love, led by faith and fed by hope, is able
 To travel through the world's wide wilderness;
 And burdens seeming most intolerable
 Both to take up and bear with cheerfulness.
 To do or suffer, what appears 'in sight
 Extremely heavy, love will make most light.

Yea, what by men is done or sufferèd,
 Either for God, or else for one another,
 Though in itself it be much blemishèd
 With many imperfections which smother,
 And drown the worth and weight of it; yet, fall
 What will or can, love makes amends for all.

CHRISTOPHER HARVEY.

ALL this time Colonel Wharncliffe lay
 securely hidden in the secret room which
 had served them so well. High up in
 the wall, just within the cupboard-like

entrance to the staircase which led to the gallery, there was a tiny sliding door, large enough to permit a man to creep through it on hands and knees. No one unacquainted with the secret would be in the least likely to discover it, and it could only be reached by means of a ladder. Crawling through the narrow aperture, you emerged into a good-sized room, not more than five feet high, however, and depending for light and air on some tiny crevices in the outer wall. It was between the ceiling of the south parlour and the floor of the room above, and it would have been quite possible to live in the house for years and never know of the existence of this curiously planned retreat.

Well supplied with rugs, food, and books, which might be read while sitting close to the largest air-hole, Colonel Wharncliffe might have passed a very tolerable day, had it not been for his great anxiety. Voices and footsteps he could indeed dis-

tinguish in his hiding-place, but the confused Babel only made him more wretched. He longed to come forth and see how matters were going, longed to learn the fate of poor Hugo. He heard the sound of the search-party ransacking every corner of the house, heard steps going up and down the little staircase, and men questioning each other as to the possibility of sliding-panels within a few yards of his invisible door. But no one had found him; and after that came a long, quiet interval, when, although he strained every nerve to listen, he could make out nothing, save that some sort of conclave must be proceeding in the hall. After a time, there were sounds as of hurried dispersion; the servants returned to the kitchen, and old nurse came up the gallery-stairs with little Evelyn, who was crying.

‘Don’t fret, child,’ he heard her say. ‘He is a brave lad, and you should be proud of him.’

Then they passed on to the nursery,

and once more there was silence. What could have happened? Hugo had kept his promise, that was evident,—but what had they done to him?

Again a step on the staircase, and again the closing of the door behind some one who crept up very slowly, and went softly into the gallery. He heard a long, sobbing sigh, but could not tell who it came from, though he fancied that the step was like Joyce's.

Sir Peregrine, meanwhile, having done his best to talk Randolph into a better temper, and having signally failed, thought that a good dinner was the least that the household could afford him for all the trouble he had taken on this hot summer day. And accordingly everyone was hastening to the kitchen and the buttery, and doing the best that could be done to furnish an unexpected meal for a dozen hungry men. In the confusion, Joyce stole away by herself to the gallery, and crouched down in a shady corner, where

she could watch the door of the north parlour without being herself seen. After a time, the constable and the two men who had gone in with Hugo returned to the hall. One of them bore the musician's clothes which Hugo had worn as a disguise. The chief-constable locked the door behind him, and pocketed the key, then stepped up to Sir Peregrine.

‘The young gentleman has revived, sir, and has donned his own riding-suit, but I doubt whether he be fit to travel to Bishop-Stortford to-night.’

‘Fit! nonsense. Confound your scruples, I tell you he shall be fit!’ interposed Randolph. ‘I’ll soon make him fit.’

He rose as though meditating an immediate visit to the prisoner, but the constable made no sign of yielding the key, and Sir Peregrine interposed.

‘Dinner first, my boy, dinner first, to sweeten your tongue and your temper. Ah! here comes a chine of beef in the very nick of time. Come, let us fall to,

and leave yon poor fellow to digest the leathering you gave him. Come on, come on, I'll do the carving, since your arm maybe is a bit weary.'

In the gallery, Joyce clenched her hands fiercely as the laughter evoked by this remark rose to her. Then a sudden thought occurred to her. She stole softly downstairs once more, ran to the kitchen, and snatched up a freshly-baked manchet, then to the buttery, where she filled a cup with sack, and, creeping out unperceived by the back-door, she stole along at the back of the house till she came to the window of the withdrawing-room, which opened down to the ground. All was very quiet there.

There were two doors to the withdrawing-room. One opened at the foot of the great oak-staircase, and near to the hall, the other door, facing the window, led to the north parlour. It was just possible that the constable might not have noticed this, and might have left it unlocked. It was a double door. She opened the one

on the withdrawing-room side, set down her burden, and listened for a moment breathlessly. Hugo was certainly alone. She softly turned the handle of the second door, and found that it yielded. She opened it a very little way, and called him, scarcely above her breath.

‘Cousin Hugo! are you there?’

He staggered forward, hardly able to believe his own ears. Yet surely it was Joyce who had spoken to him!

He flung back the door impatiently. Yes, there she stood, with the cup of wine and the manchet of bread in her hands, and her sweet eyes lifted to his.

‘You?—you here!’ he exclaimed.

‘Hush!’ she said, warningly. ‘Not one word till you have taken these. They say you are to be carried as far as Bishop-Stortford this night, and you so weary already.’

He let her draw up a chair for him, and passively took the bread and wine, which, indeed, he stood in great need of. Joyce

stole noiselessly to the locked door leading from the north parlour to the hall. Looking through the keyhole, she could see the long table laden with good cheer, and the twelve strangers sitting round it, while her mother sat in the chair by the hearth, with Robina and the three elder girls standing beside her.

‘They have but just begun their dinner. I shall have time to fetch you more,’ she said, returning to Hugo.

‘No,’ he said ; ‘I could not eat another morsel. Yet, if indeed there is time, stay with me, sweet cousin ; let me at least bid you farewell. We are not like to see each other again.’

‘Do not say that,’ she faltered, trying to keep back her tears.

He looked at her for a minute fixedly—looked at her as one who looks at a picture which he would fain carry in his mind to his dying day. The blue eyes with just that mingling of love and pain in them, the sweet mouth a little tremulous, the

colour coming and going in the rounded cheeks, the sunny brown curls somewhat disordered.

He glanced round the room and shuddered involuntarily, remembering his midnight search. The old ancestor in the corner still pointed downwards with his long taper hand, the eyes of the other pictures still seemed to follow him reproachfully. ‘You played the spy,’ they seemed to say. ‘You, in your kinsman’s house, stole like a thief at dead of night. For shame! for shame!’

‘Joyce!’ he said, as if appealing against the verdict of the pictures. ‘Joyce, say once more that you forgive me,—say once more you do not hate me!’

‘In truth,’ she sobbed, ‘you have more than repaid all the injury, you have wiped it out for ever.’

‘Say, then, that you do not hate me.’

‘Hate you!’ she sobbed. ‘How could I?’

‘Ah, more than that?’ he cried, in a

low, passionate voice. 'Joyce, Joyce—it is your love I want,—your love! Yet I have ruined your home,—I dare not ask it,—I cannot. But, Joyce, I love you—love you—love you! Wild horses shall tear me ere I breathe one word to hurt your father.'

She did not speak, but just stooped and kissed him.

'God bless you for that!' he cried. 'You pardon me by that kiss, you say you trust me!'

'Ay,' she whispered, softly. 'Ay, and love you.'

'Say it again!' he exclaimed, drawing her towards him. 'Say it once more, and I will be strong to meet death and torture!'

She flushed rosy red, but repeated the words just above her breath.

'I love you, my brave knight,—I love you!'

'Ah, not brave,' he sighed; 'but going to be, in the strength of your love, my heart! my queen! my helper!'

Poor children! their bliss was but short-lived. All too soon Hugo's love warned him of the danger which Joyce incurred by lingering.

‘No more of this,’ he said, gently. ‘My dear one, you must not stay. I risk your name—your safety; Randolph stands at nothing. One last kiss—then to prison with a strong heart. My own, my life, God bless you!’

‘Make me one promise ere we part,’ she said. ‘Promise that you will ever trust my father. Promise that you will come back to him when you are free.’

‘Ay,’ he said, smiling, but very sadly, ‘I promise, when I am free.’

Hand-in-hand they crossed the room to the double door, then once more he clasped her in his arms, kissing her again and again. No words now, for they were both of them past speaking. Their parting was a silent one. Very gently he put her from him, watched her cross the room and pass out through the window, then turned back

to his prison, closing behind him the doors which had proved for him the very portals of hope.

Before long the key of the other door was unlocked, and the chief constable entered.

‘You must follow me, sir,’ he said. ‘The horses are in readiness. I am sorry I can’t get permission to fetch you any victuals, but your guardian will not permit it.’

‘Thank you, I have need of nothing,’ said Hugo, composedly.

The constable looked at him in amaze. Was this the same man whom he had borne into the parlour but an hour before? And in fact the whole household—the whole household at least with one exception—shared in the amaze. Had Hugo doffed his old nature with his musician’s garb, and donned a new character with a crimson doublet? They had looked to see him pale, cowed, scarcely able to walk—and behold here he was bearing himself with a

dignity which was altogether foreign to him, moving slowly indeed, and not without difficulty, but bearing his head high, as though he were the possessor of some new and unknown strength. His dreamy grey eyes shone with a light that was strangely incomprehensible to all the spectators. His old expression of easy indifference had given place to an air that seemed almost triumphant. His pale face was slightly flushed. What was the meaning of it all? Was it thus that such as Hugo went to what would almost inevitably prove a lifelong imprisonment? Was it thus that he bade farewell to a life which might have been full of all things which men most prize? Was it thus that he turned his back on court favour, on pleasure, on freedom itself?

Randolph watched him curiously as he walked down the hall to the table in the centre, where one of the constables was waiting for him with a pair of handcuffs. With a touch of his old philosophic calm

he held out his hands passively and allowed the irons to be placed on his wrists without a word. It was Mrs. Wharncliffe who interceded for him.

‘Sir,’ she said, turning to Sir Peregrine, ‘surely you may spare him this indignity. Surely you may trust him.’

‘Far from it!’ broke in Randolph, with a bitter laugh. ‘I would trust him with naught. These handcuffs were meant for your husband, madam, and my brother has donned them of his own accord. I am not to blame.’

Hugo glanced wistfully across to the little group by the hearth. Joyce had half hidden herself behind Betty and Damaris, but for one instant their eyes met.

Just that one mute farewell—he dared not risk a second, lest Randolph should mark it. He turned to Mrs. Wharncliffe and kissed her hand.

‘Madam,’ he said, quickly, ‘I thank you for your hospitality and your kindness, and I pray your forgiveness—for all.’

He could not speak of what was most at his heart, but he repeated again in an undertone, and very fervently, ‘Your forgiveness for all—when you know all.’

To find words in which to answer him was almost as difficult for her. How could she thank him with all those hostile ears listening? To do so would but increase his difficulties. All she could do was by look and touch to convey to him her deep gratitude.

‘Farewell,’ she said, her voice quivering a little. ‘Farewell, cousin, and God bless you.’

He glanced swiftly round the hall, up to the gallery where he had lived through so much, and where from the background the calm-faced nun looked down upon him; round to the picture of the man struggling in the waves, his constant heart dreading no danger; then up to his own picture as a little innocent child, free from all penalty of error, his hands toying with a spaniel,

and little deeming that one day they should wear shameful fetters.

In the meantime Sir Peregrine and Randolph had bade farewell to Mrs. Wharncliffe, and the chief-constable had drawn up his men around the prisoner in impressive order. Another moment and he gave the order to march out to the great door where the horses were awaiting them. Hugo found his own chestnut there; it had been brought by one of the grooms from Longbridge Hall, where it had been quartered for some weeks. The sight gave him pleasure; it was something to have his favourite, even for what would in all probability prove his last ride.

Scarcely was he mounted when the Nurse came out hastily, bearing his lute-case.

‘You have left this, sir,’ she said.

Amid some laughter one of the constables fastened it to the saddle, making some rough joke about the musician taking his music with him to gaol. But Hugo was

proof against jokes, for the Nurse had whispered to him that he should search inside, and he had some hope that Joyce might have left him a message in it.

And now indeed the last moment had come, the household was gathered together at the door to watch their departure. Many of the eyes that watched him were dim with tears; in all he could read gratitude, in some he could read love.

Joyce clung to her mother, but never took her eyes off Hugo. That upright figure on the chestnut horse, the figure in crimson doubtlet and Spanish sombrero, with the strange new dignity of expression and the eyes bright with noble self-sacrificing love—with love for her.

And it was naught to her that Sir Peregrine quarrelled with his servants, and that Randolph swore at everyone who approached him. She heeded only one thing in all the confusion. Just at the last she heard her lover’s voice pleading rather anxiously with one of the constables.

‘I can manage him, spite of the irons,’ he said; ‘he will go better for me than for you with free hands.’

‘I cannot help it, sir, I must have the reins,’ said the man. And the prisoner, with a gesture of impatience, made them over to him.

‘Are you ready?’ said Sir Peregrine.

‘Ay, sir,’ replied the chief-constable.
‘We will follow your honour.’

Hugo bowed a farewell to the group at the door, glanced once again at Joyce, smiled faintly, and was borne away.

The members of the household did not leave the door till the horsemen were out of sight; then they quietly dispersed, for indeed none of them felt as though they could speak. A great danger had been averted from their home; the master was, for the present, at any rate, safe. But to save him a young life had been sacrificed.

CHAPTER VI.

JOYCE'S JOURNAL.

Lift up to Him thy heavie clouded eyne,
 That thou His souveraine bountie mayst behold,
 And read, through love, His mercies manifold.

SPENSER.

I SCARCE know whether to write more of this journal or to tie these few sheets together and leave them as they are. So much has happened that will not bear putting into words, and so much that may not with safety be preserved in writing. For since that last entry all things are changed. Karl is no more the wandering minstrel, but our own kinsman, Hugo Wharncliffe, but how and when and why

he revealed it to us I dare not here set down, lest perchance these papers fall into unfriendly hands. This much, however, all the world knows, and therefore I can do no wrong by putting it in my journal.

While we were living on here so quietly, one Keeling, a salter in London, brought word to Sir Leolyn Jenkyns, principal Secretary of State, that there was a conspiracy abroad to kill the King. Sir Leolyn, not willing to hearken to what was but sworn to by one man, dismissed him until he could bring a second witness to confirm his words ; whereupon he compelled his younger brother, much against his will, to get admitted to some society where they say the talk was treasonable, and then on the fourteenth day of this month of June, in the year of our Lord, 1683, both the Keeling brothers gave evidence on oath in confirmation of the plot, and the news spread through the country like wildfire. They say the conspirators have been meeting in many places in Lon-

don, but most chiefly at the house of one Colonel Rumsey in Soho Square, and in Mr. West's chambers in the Temple. Also at the sign of the 'Mitre' in Aldgate, the 'Horse Shoe,' Tower Hill, the 'King's Head,' Atheist Alley, the 'Salutation' and the 'George,' Lombard Street, and the 'Green Dragon,' Snow Hill. But, though folks seem to know the names of all the meeting-places, everyone has a different story about the plot itself. Some say that the King and the duke were to have been murdered on their way from Newmarket—that was the first story we heard, and that they escaped only by the fire at Newmarket causing the King to go back to London sooner than his wont. But this should have been in the spring. Others talk of a great insurrection that was to have been on Queen Elizabeth's day, in November next. But the strange part is that they can name no great leaders who were to head this great insurrection.

The story that seems now to be credited

by most is that which is given by two of the conspirators, who, thinking to save themselves by confession, have not fled the country like all other suspected people, but have delivered themselves up of free will. My father thinks the tale reads strangely, that it is most probably in some measure a sham plot concerted by these two, with some admixture of truth, but with many false details.

This is the outline of the story told by Mr. West and Colonel Rumsey. They say that Mr. Rumbold, the maltster who owns the Rye-House Farm in Hertfordshire, had offered them the use of his house, which is strong and well-placed. Here forty men were to be gathered; the narrow road was to be blocked by the upsetting of a cart, and, the King's coach being thus brought to a standstill, the armed men were to attack and murder him and the Duke of York, while a second division of men attacked the guards, and then, retiring, were to defend the house and moat till night

enabled them to escape. It is passing strange, though, that they could but name eight of all the forty men who were to assemble at the Rye-House, and they seem to know naught of any supply of arms or horses; nor could they name one single Whig leader who had aught to do with this scheme. However, they do declare that they have heard of conferences held by the Duke of Monmouth and other lords with some from Scotland, who planned a general rising, and spoke of seizing the King's guards. How far all this story is true no one can ever know.

Perchance there may have been some who deemed that even so treacherous a murder is justified by the present state of affairs, though one would fain believe it all a lie. But, true or false, it matters not—it is currently believed, and every Whig is in danger, everyone who has shown disapproval of the King's government, everyone who sided in former times with the Commonwealth party, risks being appre-

hended. As to the leading Whigs, we have not yet heard their fate, but my father told us that he doubted not the King would be but too thankful for any excuse to lay hands on them,—and that without fail they would be included among the Rye-House conspirators. In especial he mentioned Colonel Sydney, who, he says, is a great friend to Hugo, the bravest and best of men, but, unfortunately for him, a well-known Republican.

How hard and wearisome it has been to write all these public tidings, these hateful versions of plots and risings, and murders and treacheries, when all the while these said plots and revelations have made such chaos of our home-life !

For indeed, since that terrible 18th of June, all has been chaos. I hardly dare to think of it yet, much less to write of all that slow agony. And yet it was that same 18th of June which brought me the best thing in all the world,—a good man's love. For it was then—after they had

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used him so cruelly—then, when he was going to prison for the sake of shielding my father, that Hugo told me he loved me. It seems passing strange that all this while dreaming of Juliet, and Imogen, and many another,—I had yet never got any idea of love at all. It was Hugo who opened that new world for me, it was Hugo who gave me my first glimpse at that wonderful, wonderful joy,—and no other man on earth could ever have done it; for only he, my brave knight, had the key to fit my lock.

Surely it was God who made us for each other. Were it not for that thought, I could hardly think he ought to love me. There are so many more good, more clever, more beautiful, and more in his own world. So many too who seem to need such a great gift more than I do, with my father and mother, and this dear Mondisfield. But God has given us to each other, and there is naught for me to do, so far as I can see, but to thank Him for His great

gift, and to strive to grow more worthy of my own true love.

We all stood at the door to watch them go. Hugo walked out of the hall with far more ease than we looked for, considering his long illness. As to the fetters, he seemed not to heed the shame of them, but bore his head high, as he passed out surrounded by the constables. In his face pain was blent with a strange look of triumph, and when he was mounted on his beautiful chestnut, he looked, oh, so far the noblest of all the troop! Spite of those cruel handcuffs, which would scarce permit him to stroke the neck of his favourite steed, he seemed like the prince of the company, the others showing beside him like ruffians. Then, after much quarrelling and swearing from Sir Peregrine and that other, whom I cannot yet name, or scarce trust myself to think on, the word was given for the start.

Hugo's eyes looked into mine for the last time,—and they seemed to say, 'Cour-

age even for this! Love to all eternity!' Then the constable led off his horse, and the rest of the men fell-in behind, two and two, and thus the cavalcade passed down the drive, across the bridge, and so through the park until the bend in the road hid them from us. And I hated the trees that came betwixt us, and I hated the space which divided us, and I hated, with a blind, burning, raging hatred, the cause of all this misery, who must here be nameless.

What became of the others I do not know, but by-and-by I found that I was left alone with my mother, who all the time had held my hand in hers. She looked in my face, but I dared not meet her look, because of that rage which blazed within my heart, and must show in my eyes. But mothers know without seeing, and it was of no use. She put her arm round me, and, still keeping my right hand fast in hers, led me up to her bed-chamber. Then she signed to me to lie

down and rest on her bed, which was just what I longed to do, only that with the rest there came too the thought that all was over,—quite over, and with that a great fit of weeping which I could not check. And then all my evil thoughts, my hatred to that other rushed into words, and I raved and stormed more like a foolish child than a woman—the woman whom Hugo loves. Every moment I thought my mother would rebuke me, but for some time she did not speak. At last, laying her hand on my forehead, she said, very quietly,

‘Joyce, you are speaking of one whom Hugo loves ; and not only that, but of one whom the Lord Himself loves.’

‘How can He love such a brute—such a brute !’ I cried, almost angry to think it could be.

But my mother said nothing, and in the silence a sort of shame came over me to think of the words I had said. Presently my mother spoke again ; she began as

though describing a picture, I knew well enough whose picture.

‘A young man,’ she said, in her soft, low voice—‘a young man just of age, brought up in what for his station in life was poverty, and even privation. This had been incurred by his father’s devotion to the late king, whom he had served faithfully, and in whose cause he had suffered much. But the young man cared not much for the cause, neither could he care much for the King whom he had never known. He grudged the lost money and resented the present sufferings. At first he hoped that the King’s son would reward the family for their past devotion ; but it was not so, and the young man grew bitter and hard, and the constant hankering after money and the constant brooding over the injustice ate into his very soul. And then, while he was yet young, the plague came and swept away in one week all that made his home, and alone, he was thrown upon a world full of the worst temptations. This

man had a kinsman whom he hated—a kinsman who was richer than he, and whose property had not been lost, for he had been on the winning side. This made the young man more bitter still, and seemed to him a fresh injustice. He longed to wrest the property from his kinsman. All this time he had been surrounded by the very worst people, and in all his life there had been but one being to love him; that was a little child, whom he too loved in his rough way. But the bad craving after the money and the kinsman's property grew faster than his love for the younger brother, till at last it overshadowed it, and, with the hope of at last gaining the property, he did his brother a cruel wrong.'

My mother paused. She could not go on with the story, for who knows how it is to end? But somehow her tale had softened that dreadful, raging anger in my heart; I began to feel very sorry for that other—that other whom Hugo loves.

Then my mother knelt by the bed and

prayed. I cannot remember what she said, but I know it brought to my mind the prayer of Jairus—'My little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her that she may be healed, and she shall live.'

And I saw, as I had never seen before, that hatred was death and that love was life; and I hoped that Jesus would lay His hands on me and heal me.

And then all things grew very still, and my mother's voice seemed to go further and further away into a dreamy distance, and I fell asleep.

It was evening when I woke. Through the open window I could hear the cawing of the rooks as they flew home to their nests in the elm-trees, and sitting up in bed, still somewhat stiff and weary, I could see a long, wavering line of black against the evening sky. How they fluttered those huge wings and how contentedly they cawed! I had always liked the rooks, but never so well as to-night. And, remem-

bering how God cared even for birds, I could bear to remember too how Hugo was still on his weary journey, worn out and exhausted perhaps, but still 'cared for.'

With a great longing to be out of doors, I put back the curtains which my mother had drawn, and, stealing downstairs, went out through the withdrawing-room window, and so through the pleasance to the apple-walk. It was like coming out of doors after an illness,—in part because my knees felt odd and shaky, but chiefly because all the world seemed so beautiful, and so new, and so full of things one had never greatly thought of before. Most of the birds were a-bed and asleep, but the rooks still cawed, and a thrush sang its evening lay among the trees at the further side of the moat. I sat down on the grassy, sloping bank, and listened to it; and it seemed as though the grass were softer and greener, and the water clearer, and the sunset sky ruddier than ever before. All the world seemed that night to speak

of God, to cry out 'He is here! He is here!' and I knew that His Spirit was in my heart too,—and in Hugo's.

Sitting there beside the moat, my mother found me, and she too sat down and listened.

Then, when the thrush had ceased, I told her of Hugo's love to me, and mine to him,—all which she knew right well before. Yet, for all that, she would fain have had me tell her with my own lips,—and it was better so, though at first it was hard. Not that my mother said one word of rebuke. But it was somehow hard to put our story into words, and I knew she was sorry that all had gone as it had. She would fain have had me yet a child. And, thinking it over, I see that it was natural. For she knew well what I only begin to know,—that love means pain,—and she would fain have kept me for years to come content with the home-life.

One word she let fall, too, about this past month.

‘I have thought of you as a child, little daughter,’ she said. ‘And now I blame myself for it. I blame neither you nor Hugo, but I blame myself.’

She thought, I know, of the long afternoons in the gallery, when Evelyn and I had amused him. But then, how could she know that he was aught but Karl the minstrel, or that we should love each other?

And we agreed that it were best not to speak of this even to my sisters, as yet. ‘Only,’ said my mother, with such a beautiful smile on her face, ‘when you want to talk, come to me, little Joyce.’

And then, blushing slightly, she told me a little—a very little—about the time when she and my father had first loved each other, she being just my age. And they were not formally plighted to each other for some years, because our grandparents thought them both too young. And she told me how anxious she was before the battle of Worcester, and of how

my father was wounded there, and she heard naught of him for weeks. Then, by-and-by, we walked back to the house together. I think I never knew before quite what my mother was. Is it that Hugo's love has opened my eyes to all other love too?

CHAPTER VII.

A CONTEST OF WILLS.

He that endures for what his conscience knows
Not to be ill, doth from a patience high
Look only on the cause whereto he owes
Those sufferings,—not on his miseries.
The more he endures, the more his glory grows,
Which never grows from imbecility.
Only the best composed and worthiest hearts
God sets to act the hardest constantest parts.

S. SAMUEL.

THE cavalcade did not pass through the village of Mondisfield. Hugo watched anxiously to see whether they should take the turning to the village at the cross-roads. They paused for a minute, but only to bid farewell to Sir Peregrine, who branched off there with his two serving-

men, returning to Longbridge Hall. He bade the prisoner think better of his resolution before nightfall, good-naturedly reminding him that he might even yet ride into London as a free man.

‘Think better of it, for your brother’s sake,’ he repeated. ‘’Tis but a sorry day’s work for him to ride back with you in the stead of that confounded colonel.’

‘I have made my choice, sir, and must abide by it,’ said Hugo, gravely.

He saw Randolph’s brow darken ominously at his words, and felt a curious regret as he saw the Suffolk squire ride away. Things had indeed come to a pretty pass when Sir Peregrine Blake could be clung to as a sort of forlorn hope—a protector! The order of the little company was now changed. Randolph motioned to the second constable to drop behind; and himself rode side by side with the prisoner, talking across him to the constable who held his reins. Hugo was oppressed by his presence; it added not a little to

the discomforts of that miserable ride.

And now they began to push on quickly, for to reach Bishop-Stortford before night would need hard riding. On past wayside cottages with thatched roofs and creeper-laden walls; on past haymakers busy with their rakes and pitchforks; on past the region of cultivation, and over a vast heathy plain with no tree or shrub to give the slightest shade, and the burning midsummer sun beating down upon them mercilessly.

Randolph watched his brother very narrowly. When would that strange look of triumph, that curious dignity of mien, leave him? What was its cause? Did it indeed bode the ruin of all his hopes? Did it indeed bespeak the end of his influence over the youth? No, that he could not believe. Could the work of a lifetime be undone in so short a while? It was impossible, incredible! His old tactics would succeed at length, though possibly not just yet. He should work upon

the sensitive frame, and so at last regain his influence over the rebel spirit. And in the long run it would prove all for Hugo's good. Of course it was for his good. He repeated this to himself again and again, pacifying his conscience.

And so, though the sun was intolerable, and the hard riding wearisome enough to the whole company, he welcomed the discomforts, trusting that they would further his own ends. The heat, which was turning the worthy constable's skin to a brilliant copper colour, which was bringing wreaths of foam upon the necks of the horses, this would tell upon Hugo—would wear him out as nothing else would. Already there were lines of pain round the sensitive mouth. Endurance had never proved one of his characteristics. He took things quietly, but succumbed very soon. Surely, with careful treatment, Randolph could manage to bring him to his senses before they reached London?

And presently, sure enough, his scrutiny

was rewarded. He saw traces of evident exhaustion setting in. Nor indeed was it wonderful. Hugo had gone through much on the previous day, had slept but little, had tasted no food that morning save the bread and the wine which Joyce had brought him, and had suffered unspeakable things both mentally and bodily. Pain dimmed for a while the lover's rapture which had hitherto borne him up. His head drooped, the burning flush passed from his face and left it unnaturally pale.

'Bear up, sir,' said the constable, in a kindly voice. 'We are nigh upon a village where there is a decent inn. A glass of home-brewed will make you another man.'

Randolph speedily interposed, however.

'We can take a bait there, an you will, both for men and horses,' he said, peremptorily. 'But my brother shall not be cockered up as though he were a prince. He shall feel that there is a difference betwixt free men and prisoners.'

Hugo did not speak, but the muscles of his face quivered. The pain, and the weariness, and the intolerable thirst were bad enough, but Randolph's words seemed to cut him like a knife. Worst of all, he knew that this starving scheme meant that more pressure was to be put upon him to reveal what he knew of Colonel Wharncliffe.

The constable said no more, and they rode on, leaving the heathy plain behind, and passing on between fields and orchards, until about five o'clock they reached the village spoken of, and halted at the door of the 'Green Man.'

All save the prisoner dismounted, Randolph went into the inn, and the rest followed leaving only one man without in charge. Had Hugo meditated escape, now would have been his time. But he knew that escape was impossible, even had he been in a state to attempt it. And as it was he was too much spent to dream of aught but obtaining such brief comfort as might be from the shade of the great

chestnut-tree which spread half-across the village street, and from the momentary respite from hard riding.

Randolph had judged quite rightly, this enforced waiting at the inn-door, within reach of the refreshment he needed so sorely, did make him realise very keenly the difference between free men and prisoners. Wearily waiting, with the knowledge that in a few minutes the miserable journey must be resumed, he closed his eyes, unmindful of the group of children who had already drawn near to stare at the unwonted spectacle of a gentleman with lace cravat and plumed beaver, under the charge of mounted constables, and wearing irons on his wrists. Their comments did not in the least disturb him, only after a time he became aware that voices were whispering around him, and he caught the tantalizing repetition of the words 'thirst,' and 'water.' Was it only the echo of his own thoughts? or was some fiend mocking his wants?

He roused himself from the half-faint, half-drowsy state into which he had fallen. The constable was a few paces off feeding the horses, but the voices had been real not imaginary. Close beside him stood two rosy village children, and raised high up, as high as their little chubby arms would admit, was a brown pitcher full of water. He smiled.

‘Is it for me?’ he asked.

‘Ay, sir,’ said the elder of the two shyly, dropping a curtsey which nearly upset the pitcher. But the horse was high, and the children were small, and Hugo’s fetters would not allow him to reach the water, not even though he bent low down on the horse’s neck, and not even though the children stood on their tallest tiptoe. In all his wretchedness he could not help smiling a little, but the children, looking at the white weary face, were more inclined to cry. At this supreme moment a tall loosely-made lad slouched forward; it was the village innocent. Muttering something unintelligible,

he took the pitcher from the little ones, and with a smile in his wandering eyes, which for a moment made the foolish face almost beautiful, held the water to Hugo's lips. To his parched throat it seemed that no draught had ever been so delicious, while the kindness of these strangers touched him deeply. After all, the world was not so black as he had deemed it. Men might be cruel, but an innocent and a couple of children had cared for him; one day he would tell that story to Joyce. One day, when he had kept his last promise and gone back to Mondisfield. Yet how could that ever be? How could aught but lifelong imprisonment await him? An agony of realisation swept over him, but he bravely tried to turn to other thoughts. And if not here, then he would tell her that story—would tell her all—all—in that city which lay at the end of the pilgrim's journey, in which she believed so implicitly and for which he also began to hope.

At that moment Randolph emerged from the door of the inn, and strolled leisurely towards his horse; the innocent, still regarding Hugo with all his eyes, stood in the way.

‘Get out, you d——d idiot!’ he exclaimed, pushing him roughly away. ‘What do you mean by coming so near?’

The innocent, with an indescribable look of resentment, slunk away, the children took to their heels and ran for shelter to the other side of the chestnut-tree, as though this fine gentleman had been the devil himself.

‘How now, Hugo?’ he exclaimed, as he mounted his horse. ‘Tired of your new game? art willing to be a free man once more?’

‘An you be willing to make me one,’ said Hugo, gravely. ‘My freedom lies in your keeping, not in my own.’

‘Fool! you know right well that you have but to speak one word, and those gyves are off your wrists in a twinkling.’

‘And that word I will never speak.’

‘Ah, well! some folk love to pose as martyrs. We shall see, we shall see! Newgate will make you tell another tale, my fine fellow.’

‘Will it be Newgate?’ asked Hugo, startled out of his reserve, and speaking in his ordinary tone. Somehow the name of the gaol made the dim, almost dream-like future stand out with a hideous reality. Newgate! that hell upon earth! Was he to go there? He had at least hoped for the Tower, the ignominy of which seemed far less galling.

‘Assuredly it will be Newgate,’ said Randolph, with great composure. ‘Bethink yourself what it will be for one of your birth and breeding to be herded with thieves and murderers, and all the scum of the City. Don’t blame me for sending you there; ’tis your own doing.’

‘You are right,’ said Hugo, sadly. ‘It is my own doing.’

And with that he fell into deep thought

and spoke no more, leaving Randolph surprised and a little softened by his very unexpected reply. The elder brother, too, fell into a reverie, and thus they went on their way, leaving the village behind them—the innocent waving a last farewell to Hugo, and repeating again and again, in his shrill, monotonous voice, ‘God ’ild you, sir! God ’ild you!’

Three more hours of hard riding brought them near to their destination; Hugo heavy-hearted and faint with pain and weariness, felt a gleam of comfort as he caught sight of the gables and chimneys of Bishop-Stortford, and the spire of St. Michael’s Church. The curfew-bell was ringing as they drew near to the town, ringing in the close of this longest day in his whole life. In the sky was a glory of gold and crimson and floating purple cloudlets; the whole place was suffused with the ruddy glow of the sunset, and the lights which shone here and there in the windows seemed primrose pale by

contrast. The arrival of the horsemen caused quite a commotion in the quiet little country town. The women, standing with their knitting at the doors, beckoned to others within the houses to haste and see this strange sight. A group of urchins playing at shovelboard by the wayside paused in their game to stare, and at sight of the galloping horses broke out into a noisy cheer, waving their caps and shouting with all their might.

That was the last straw. The hideous mockery of it was more than Hugo could bear, and the tears started to his eyes. Poor little urchins! little they knew what the horsemen whom they cheered so lustily had been about! But the consciousness that every eye was upon him made him recover himself instantly. Drawing himself up, he rode on, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and only longing for the rest and shelter which must soon come.

At length they reached the inn where but a few weeks before he had slept with

Randolph on their way to Longbridge Hall. How different all had been then! How gaily he and Randolph had spent that evening! How little he had thought of all the danger that lay before him!

A little crowd had gathered at the inn door to watch the strangers; he was keenly conscious of their comments as the constable helped him to dismount. Giddy, exhausted, hardly able to stand, he waited for what seemed an eternity while Randolph stood on the step talking with the landlord and the chief constable. The burning colour rose to his face as he heard the words passed from one to another in the crowd—'A traitor!' 'One of the conspirators!' 'The plot!' 'What! will 'a hang 'un at Tyburn!' 'Ay, ay, to be sure all of 'em'll swing for it!' 'Serve the d——d traitor right, too!' 'Nay, but he's a fine young spark too, 'a will look rarely on the gallows-tree!'

'Don't you heed them, sir,' said one of the constables, a burly giant who grasped

him firmly by the arm, as much with the view of supporting him, as of keeping him in custody. 'Don't you heed them! They're naught but buzzing flies. Their heads be set round with eyes, so they can do naught but stare and buzz.'

Hugo smiled, rather as courteously acknowledging the man's kindness than as feeling any amusement at his words. For indeed an over-driven horse may be sorely teased by a swarm of flies, and the staring, jesting crowd taxed his powers of endurance to the utmost. At length came a welcome diversion.

'Bring the prisoner forward!' said the chief constable, and Hugo was accordingly marched in between two of the men, and half led, half dragged upstairs.

The landlord stood at the head of the staircase ready to usher them into a bed-chamber, within which Randolph was quarrelling vehemently with the chief-constable.

‘Well, sir, I’ll not be responsible for getting the prisoner to London to-morrow, if you will have it so,’ the man was saying, angrily.

‘And if you thwart my purpose,’ retorted Randolph, with a volley of oaths, ‘I tell you you shall pay dearly for it. Do you think I don’t know more about the lad than you do?’

The constable growled something inarticulate, and, as at that moment Hugo entered, said no more. He merely examined the lock of the door, bade one of the men give the prisoner what assistance he needed, and followed the landlord to another room. Randolph lingered a minute, watching Hugo keenly, as he tried to take off his broad-brimmed hat, but owing to his fettered hands, failed in the attempt.

‘When hunger makes you change your mind you can send me word,’ he said, with a mocking smile.

Hugo made no reply.

‘Till then I will wish you good-evening. Be ready to start to-morrow at seven of the clock.’

Still Hugo kept silence.

‘Do you hear what I say?’ asked Randolph, sharply.

‘I shall be ready at seven of the clock,’ returned Hugo, with an unmoved face.

Randolph left the room, feeling curiously repulsed and surprised. That Hugo, who had been hitherto so plastic in his hands, should suddenly develop this dignity of endurance, this strength of resistance, was to him utterly unaccountable.

Truth to tell the dignity did not last long, for no sooner had his brother left him, than, with a groan of irrepressible suffering, he fell back into the nearest chair, too wretched even to heed the presence of the constable.

‘Come, sir,’ said the man, ‘keep up your heart. Them buzzing flies below know naught of the truth. I’d not heed them were I in your shoon.’

‘I care naught for them!’ said Hugo. ‘But he—he is my brother—my brother, I tell you! I care for naught else!’

‘’Tis a hard case,’ said the man, genuinely sorry for the poor fellow, who had indeed won all hearts by his conduct in the morning. ‘But belike, sir, it will turn out better than you fear. I can’t bring you supper, for ’tis against my orders, but an you will I can help you off with your boots and things. A man’s but a babe in such fetters as these.’

He was a rough nurse, but a kindly one, and kept up a perpetual flow of conversation, with a view to keeping his prisoner’s thoughts off the graver questions which were likely to haunt him.

‘And as to imprisonment for life!’ he remarked, cheerfully, when he had seen Hugo to bed and was about to lock him up for the night, ‘as to imprisonment, it ain’t so bad as folk think for. Your honour is over young to have left a sweetheart behind him, and lor’ bless you! life in

Newgate is none so strict, you'll find many a buxom wench there.'

The incongruity of this worthy man's comfort touched Hugo's sense of the ridiculous. Just because the words were such a mockery, just because they good-naturedly and unthinkingly enough touched on so sore a subject, they affected him as nothing else on earth could have done at that moment,—he burst into a violent paroxysm of laughter. He was locked up securely; he was looking forward to nothing but a life of privation and misery; he was ill, and weary, and sore at heart, and yet he laughed till the old four-post bed shook, laughed till wrath at his own laughter checked him, and at length brought him once more to a state of sober exhaustion.

Down below he could hear a noisy party supping and drinking; more than once he could distinguish Randolph's voice in boisterous merriment. This tended more than anything to sober him once more,

and, recollecting how much yet depended on his strength of purpose and determined resistance, he resolutely turned from all thoughts, and almost by an effort of will made sleep visit his weary brain. The burly constable had as much as he could do to wake him the next morning.

‘God help us!’ he exclaimed. ‘’Tis surely but babes and sucklings that sleep so sound. Supperless to bed too! An I mistake not, your honour is as innocent of this plot as the unborn babe.’

‘I knew naught of any plot,—naught!’ said Hugo, emphatically. And it was some comfort to him to feel sure that the man believed him. It was the only comfort he was to have that day, which proved a very hard one. Leaving Bishop-Stortford behind them early on that summer morning, they rode on rapidly to London, in the same order as before, Hugo between the chief-constable and Randolph. Not a word had passed between the brothers, but Randolph was able to

gauge very accurately his chances of success. They were great. He felt far more hopeful than on the previous evening. Had it not been for this, the dreary ride would have been less tolerable to him, for the chief-constable was so wrath with him for his harshness to his brother, that he could make nothing of him as far as conversation went, and it was against his policy to speak to Hugo. Indeed, the prisoner was almost past speaking. Only once did he make any remark. It was as they were riding past the Rye-House. He looked up curiously at this place, the name of which must be for ever hateful to him. High walls, a battlemented, turretted house, with two oriel windows, green trees close beside it waving in the summer wind, and beyond the river Lea winding its tranquil course through level green meadows. An innocent-looking place enough ! Had it indeed been the scene destined for so treacherous a murder ? Or was this plot but a device of the enemies' ? Would

it prove a mere *ruse*, like the Meal Tub Plot?

‘There is the place that has got you into trouble, sir,’ said the chief-constable, with a smile. ‘But belike you know it too well to need my showing.’

‘I never heard aught of it till——’ Hugo broke off abruptly, aware that Randolph was listening, and thankful that he had checked himself in time and had not added, ‘The day before yesterday.’

But the consciousness that he had nearly been betrayed into a piece of indiscretion troubled him not a little. It was so hard to be on his guard at every turn. Far harder to-day than it had been on the preceding day. He was suffering more acutely from the effects of the merciless flogging; he was weakened by hunger and fatigue, he was parched with thirst; his heart failed him at the thought of the eighteen miles which yet lay between them and London. And yet, even though the

journey was so wearisome, the end was more to be dreaded than all! Thinking of that, he would have been willing indefinitely to prolong this ride,—the last ride he was ever likely to take! Life-long imprisonment! Good heavens! why had he been endowed with an imagination? How horrible were the vivid pictures which rose before him! And the world was so beautiful! Nature so fair! The rapture of 'leafy June' thrilled through him with that bitter-sweet consciousness which belongs by right to 'last times.'

They rode on through the long, straggling village of Edmonton, on over Stamford Hill, where he half hoped that they might be waylaid by the highwaymen who often resorted there. Surely then he might make one last effort at escape. But no highwaymen appeared; the party of horsemen rode on unmolested. And now they were in sight of London itself, now his last ride was almost at an end, his parting with Randolph drawing near. It felt to him like

some hideous nightmare. Was he indeed the same Hugo who had ridden forth on that May morning, stifling all anxiety and laying aside all care in the mere joy of existence? Could a few weeks change one's very nature and upset one's whole world? Now once more he rode through the same streets, with shameful fetters on his wrists, with the burden of another's safety in his keeping, with naught before him but shame and suffering.

On through Bishopsgate Street Without and Within, up Cornhill among the crowds of staring passengers ; until, rather to his surprise, he was suddenly halted at an inn not far from the 'Standard.' What it was for he was too dazed and weary to make out, but the constables helped him from his horse and led him in ; he was borne unresistingly through passages and up and down steps, and finally left in a private sitting-room with no word of explanation. Bewildered, but too miserable to try to think clearly, he heard the door locked from

without, stood still for a minute in a sort of stupefaction, then staggered across the room to an oaken settle, upon which he sank prone. He was vaguely conscious that through the open window sounds of horses' hoofs and of passengers floated in, and above all there rang the shrill, clear tones of a woman's voice calling, 'Strawberries, ripe strawberries!' The high, bell-like notes drew nearer and nearer, then gradually grew fainter again till they died away in the distance. Presently a much nearer sound startled him back from semi-consciousness; the key turned in the lock, the door opened, and Randolph entered. Startled, wholly unfit for an interview with his brother, his heart beat so fast that it half suffocated him.

'For God's sake give me some water!' he exclaimed.

'My poor lad,' said Randolph, in his kindest voice, taking, however, no notice of his request, 'you are quite worn out; and, if you go to Newgate in such a state,

you will be down with gaol fever before many days are over.'

'I can't help that,' said Hugo, shortly.

'Ay, you can help it, and for my sake you must help it!' said Randolph, with real earnestness in his tone. 'Do you think I care naught for you? Do you think it has not tortured me to find you turned against me—to find you thus thwarting me? Come back to me, lad, ere it is too late! All shall be forgiven and forgotten. The king will reward you—I will reward you; half the estate shall be yours, and you shall be to me the most trusted, the most loved in all the world.'

Never had Hugo heard such words from his brother, never had his love revealed itself as now in look and tone; the blind devotion, the unfailing loyalty of a lifetime had been nourished on the poorest fare. As a child a rough caress had kept him happy for days; but such events had been rare indeed. He recalled them vividly just because they had been so infrequent.

Then in later life Randolph had been stern and exacting, only on rare occasions he would drop a few words of praise or of approval, and thus bind Hugo to him with the ardent, unquestioning loyalty which asked so little and gave so much.

And now for the first time in his life this stern, hard man unbent, humbled himself, pleaded with one whom he had hitherto peremptorily commanded, and in the most dangerously tempting way exerted again all his influence on the susceptible nature which till now he had kept in slavery.

A curiously fascinating smile stole over his strong face, lit up the usually cold eyes, and flickered about the hard mouth.

‘You are faint and hungry—oh, very hungry! I know all about it. And I am dying to feed you, Hugo. Come, you have withstood me far too long. But I’ll forgive all, for you have shown what mettle you are made of. Only delay no more.

You are almost fainting; I'll get you a cup of sack—but see, just sign this paper first, and then all will be well, and naught shall come betwixt us more.'

A vague, delicious hope stole over Hugo. Might there be some loophole of escape—some permissible compromise? He took the paper in his hands, and with some difficulty read it. Had he not been acquainted with legal phraseology, it would have hopelessly baffled him; but, as it was, he made out that, wrapt up in many words and obscured by rambling sentences, the document was nothing less than a declaration that he would reveal all that might be of service in unravelling the plot. It was put in a very ambiguous way, but that was, he felt convinced, the drift of the whole thing.

He fell back into his former position, and thought, or rather struggled to think. His brain reeled. A wild confusion of possibilities seemed to crowd around him.

Randolph, in the meanwhile, produced a goose quill and an ink-horn, and drew a small oaken table forward.

‘Come,’ he said, patting his head caressingly, ‘you are so weary, dear old fellow, you scarce know whether you are on your head or your heels. Make haste and sign this. Then we will come home, and Jerry shall see to you. Come, lad, ’tis your duty to both King and country—no private considerations can weigh against those two. Were it such a preposterous thing to do, think you I should ask it of you? Come, sign, and trust one who loves you better than you think for.’

Once again it was Joyce on one side, with independence and conscience-hearkening, and Randolph on the other, with obedience and lawful authority! It was the new strength against the incalculable power of old association and the habits of a lifetime. If only Randolph would not look at him with such kind eyes! If only he would once more treat him harsh-

ly! Right, duty, which way did they point? Ah! yes; but, even if he knew, could he obey? Fiends seem dragging him down, down, into a peace which he knew would prove bondage. A hideous confusion reigned within him. Right! was there such a thing at all? Would not expediency prove the safest rule of life?

‘Ah, God! God! the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful!’

The words, mechanically repeated by him day by day, now rose in a bitter cry from his soul. In his anguish he called for help as though on a fellow-being.

‘Come, lad,’ said Randolph, smiling kindly, ‘sign and have done with it. Delays are dangerous.’

‘Yes,’ said Hugo, springing to his feet with an energy that amazed his brother—
‘yes, they are in truth dangerous!’

He tore the paper in half, he tore it again and again, he flung the fragments from him as though they had been polluted.

‘There is my answer, and I have no more to say ; now do your worst !’

There was a breathless pause. The two brothers stood facing each other, a deep dark flush spread over the face of the elder—the wrath of a strong man baffled, the hatred of a tempter foiled, gleamed in his eyes ; the younger, his gaze fixed on his guardian’s face, grew each instant paler and paler, as though the struggle to resist that fiendish temptation were robbing him of life itself.

‘By my troth !’ said Randolph at length, in a low, passionate voice, ‘you shall have your fool’s choice ! I *will* do my worst !’

Hugo’s lips parted as though he would fain have spoken, but no words came. He made a step forward, and a gesture—was it of entreaty, or was it merely for physical help ? That would remain for ever unknown, for he fell senseless to the ground. Randolph bent for an instant over the inanimate form, then strode to the door, once more returned, once more

looked anxiously at the ashy face, hesitated a moment, then, with a fearful oath, turned away and left the room, locking the door behind him.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TERRIBLE NIGHT

Come sleep, oh, sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low ;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw ;
Oh, make in me those civil wars to cease ;
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

THE horses, still bearing the marks of hard riding, stood in waiting at the door of the inn. There was a confusion of many voices, many feet, many wheels, and many street cries. Hugo was vaguely conscious of it all as he was led forth.

Another high clear voice was calling,
‘Strawberries, ripe strawberries!’

A plaintive looking girl was trailing
along with a large basket calling, ‘Rose-
mary and briar! rosemary and briar!’

‘What!’ exclaimed one and another in
the group gathered to watch the horses.
‘One of the plot men, say you?’ ‘A Rye-
House man!’ ‘A rogue!’ ‘A traitor!’
‘Lord, save us! but he’s a fine young
spark!’ ‘Look you, there he comes.
Rare and pale too, one would a thought
they had most racked un.’ ‘Lord love ye,
they can’t put un to the torture now!
not except in Scotland with Lauderdale.’
‘But a stripling, he be! naught but a
stripling!’ ‘Down with all traitors, say I
—and long live the King!’

This led to a small outburst of loyalty,
and amid a storm of mingled cheers and
groans, and a shower of stones and refuse
from which the burly constable did his
best to shelter the prisoner, Hugo was led
off in the direction of Newgate.

And now they had left Cornhill behind them, and were making their way through crowded Cheapside. Now they caught a passing glimpse of the busy masons and builders at work on new St. Paul's, and now gloomy Newgate Street lay before them. At last the grim pile itself loomed into sight; they paused before the grisly-looking gate. Hugo was dimly aware that the burly constable carried in his belongings,—the valise which had been left at Longbridge Hall, and the lute case. He wondered what would become of them, he vaguely wondered what would become of himself; he followed mechanically, a constable on each side of him, and the chief-constable in advance, while an official took them into a small room, where the governor of Newgate was waiting to interview them. It was only by an intolerable effort that he roused himself sufficiently to answer the questions which were put to him. Then after a few minutes the men who had hitherto been his guardians prepared

to leave. He roused himself again, bade them good day, and thanked them for their courtesy. He became conscious that he was alone in this horrible place,—that his last friends had left him—that Randolph had finally deserted him and that he was at the mercy of a brute.

The governor regarded him fixedly for a minute, evidently taking his measure. Then he made an entry in a large book upon the table, and struck a bell which stood beside him, upon which an official appeared at the door.

‘Twenty pound fetters,’ said the governor, ‘and one of the prisoners to rivet them.’

The man disappeared,—Hugo stood motionless, the expression of his face not one whit altered. The governor regarded him again and yet more keenly. ‘Cool customer,’ he remarked, to himself; ‘will need discipline!’

The door opened again, a gaoler entered, a man with small twinkling eyes and

shaggy hair, carrying the keys of his office. He was followed by a much more repulsive-looking prisoner, who bore the heavy irons which the governor had ordered. Without a word Hugo submitted to necessity and allowed the chains to be riveted upon his ankles. Just at the time he minded the touch of the dirty prisoner's hands more than the irons themselves. Meanwhile the governor was giving directions to the gaoler, and Hugo saw a gleam of fiendish amusement pass over the features of the prisoner who was still busy with his fetters. This somehow nettled him, stung into life his desire for resistance. He faced round upon the governor.

‘What right have you to load me with irons before trial, sir?’ he asked, with far more strength and fire in his manner than the man had given him credit for.

‘Right!’ roared the governor, with a brutal laugh. ‘Oddsfish! to hear the young spark! Why, bless your young in-

nocence, you've no "rights" in Newgate!

'How about the Habeas Corpus Act, sir?' said Hugo, calmly.

The governor smiled, but more respectfully.

'Ah, 'tis true, you have me there, young sir. There is that cursed Habeas Corpus, and a bad day it was for merry England when that was made law—defrauding honest gaolers of their due, and favouring knaves and vagabonds. We were better off in Newgate four years ago, when those meddlesome Commons left us to ourselves, weren't we, Scroop?'

The gaoler acquiesced with a sardonic grin—the governor broke again into loud, brutal laughter.

'Well, well,' he said, after a minute, recovering himself. 'We waste time, and time don't crawl to the governor of Newgate, whatsoever it do to the prisoners. Away with him, Scroop—discipline and the dungeon.'

And with this terse, alliterative, and

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alluring sentence, Hugo found himself dismissed.

Scroop dragged him along interminable and dingy passages, the very air of which seemed laden with all that was foul and lowering. When he stumbled, as he very frequently did from weariness and the weight of the irons about his feet, the gaoler swore at him.

‘I’d have you know, sir, that there be such things as whips in Newgate,’ he said, with a savage grin. ‘Ay, and prisoners to wield them, too, with right good will on their mates.’

‘I have had enough of thrashings though for many a day to come,’ said Hugo, smiling a little. ‘And it is scarcely reasonable to growl when you have laden me with such fetters.’

Something in his tone made the gaoler turn and look at him more attentively than he had yet done. Brutal as the man was, he could yet perceive that the prisoner was somehow different from any

prisoner with whom he had yet come into contact. He swore no more, he walked more slowly, for the first time in his life he wondered. What was there about this new-comer that appealed to him so strangely? Silently he helped him down a flight of stone steps, at the foot of which he paused to unlock a narrow door. As it swung back, dismally creaking on its hinges, there was a sound of rushing, thumping, scrambling within.

‘Rats!’ said Scroop, laconically. ‘But they’ll not attack you, sir, an you leave them alone! Plenty of garbage for them to feed on in Newgate!’ he laughed, grimly.

Hugo glanced round. The wretched little cell was absolutely bare, save that in one place the grey flagstones were slightly raised as though to form a bed, and another stone was laid across at the head for a pillow. The walls were reeking with damp, the atmosphere was insufferable, what little air and light there was, came from a small grating which opened into

a passage at the foot of the stairs. He was past complaining, however. He just dropped down on the stone bed without a word. The gaoler stood perplexed—he was not used to this sort of thing.

‘Well, for a hard bed your honour seems to take it pretty easy!’ he said, regarding him curiously.

‘Water—for God’s sake!’ said Hugo, faintly.

Scroop hesitated a moment, looked again at him fixedly, and finally walked away, returning before long with a pitcher of water and a hunch of bread, which he set down on the floor beside the prisoner. Then without another word he went out, closing the door noisily behind him. Hugo involuntarily shuddered as the key grated in the rusty lock. It roused him, however, and he sat up and drank thirstily, then once more fell back on his stony couch too weary as yet to eat, though the bread, for which a few hours before he would have given much, stood on the floor

beside him. But the delay proved fatal, for not many minutes after he was roused from a state of stupor by the sound of pattering feet, and looking up he saw that three fat, brown rats were at work upon the bread, gnawing, nibbling, fighting over it. He found himself idly speculating what they would do when it was eaten, but as to moving a finger, driving them off, rescuing the bread or eating it afterwards, no power on earth could have made him do it.

Gradually the little light that had crept in through the grating faded away, the cell became quite dark; he could no longer watch the rats, he could only hear them and occasionally feel them as they scamp-ered about the place; their noise kept him from sleeping, their frequent raids kept him in an uncomfortable state of wakeful suspense. One thing was very clear to him: the lifelong imprisonment, if it was to be in this cell, would not be of very long duration. He wondered whether death

would free him that night, wondered whether dying hurt much, wondered whether this strange sinking, this feeling of being dragged down, down, endlessly down might perhaps be the beginning of the end.

All at once the sound of a human voice made him start violently. He sat up, and tried to make out in the murky darkness where the speaker could be.

‘Art weary of life?’ said the voice.

‘In these quarters, ay, verily,’ replied Hugo.

‘You can change them this moment, an you will,’ said the voice.

He thought that it came from the grating, and was somewhat reassured.

‘How can that be? Tell me, for the love of God!’ he exclaimed.

‘Nay,’ said the voice. ‘But for the love of gold.’

‘Money!’ exclaimed Hugo. ‘Can that take me out of this accursed place?’

‘It can take you to a dry and spacious room, and give you a bed fit for a Christian

to lie on; it can give you food and wine, and it can lighten your fetters.'

'Ten gold pieces,' exclaimed Hugo, eagerly, 'if you will but take me hence!'

There was a sound of laughter; it was like a mocking fiend.

'Ten guineas! No, my duck, you don't stir under twenty.'

'Twenty!' Hugo mused a minute. All the money he had in the world was the fifty guineas which Randolph had given him at Longbridge Hall. He must not stake the whole of this even for his release and better quarters. 'Well, then, twenty guineas.'

'Twenty guineas will but take you to the common ward; 'tis full to-night, they be packed close as herrings in a tub!'

'Then will I most assuredly stay here,' said Hugo, resolutely.

He fell back again on the stones.

'But,' said the voice, 'an you stay in this damp hole, you're not long for this world. The toughest can but stand it a

few weeks. You're signing your own death-warrant, and all for the sake of a few guineas more or less. Now for sixty guineas I'll get you into the press yard where you can live like a prince, have your fine friends to visit you by day, and feed upon the fat of the land.'

'I can't pay it,' said Hugo; 'I haven't such a sum in the world.'

There was truth in his voice. The invisible being knew that he must reduce his terms.

'Well, then, let us say fifty and end the haggling.'

'Nay,' said Hugo, ''tis impossible; leave me and torment me not further.'

'Well, since you will have it,' said the voice. Then again, after a pause, 'One more chance. There's the castle—fine, airy rooms, plenty of light, good food, though not so good as the press yard; I'll get you a private chamber in the castle, if you will give me forty gold pieces.'

'Agreed!' said Hugo, catching at the

first proposal which it was really in his power to accept. He took the sum named from his purse, and Scroop, hearing the chink of the gold pieces, lost no time in unlocking the door and helping the prisoner—almost carrying him, in fact—up the stone steps which led from his dungeon.

‘Nat!’ he roared, in his stentorian voice, ‘bring the fetters!’

The vaulted passage rang and echoed, dismally returning the last word. Nat came scurrying along with a lantern in one hand and his implements in the other. He was the same evil-looking prisoner who had been employed to rivet the twenty pound irons, and he grinned derisively at Hugo as he proceeded to release him and to fasten instead round his ankles a far lighter pair of shackles in which he could move with very little discomfort. When this was done Scroop took him by the arm and led him along labryinths of stone passages, which he could but dimly perceive by the flickering light of the lantern.

‘The common debtors’ side!’ said Scroop, jerking his thumb in the direction of a large door, ‘and the common felons!’ he nodded his head in the opposite direction.

Their course seemed to lie midway between the two, and Hugo was relieved to find himself in a less noisome atmosphere. Scroop dragged him up flight after flight of stone stairs, and at length paused before a narrow door which he proceeded to unlock.

‘You may thank your stars, young sir,’ he said, gloomily, ‘that I let you out on such low terms. Mark my words, many don’t get such quarters as these under five hundred pounds.’

Hugo wondered what princely accommodation was about to be offered him, and was not unreasonably wrathful when he found that this private room was of the smallest, and was fitted with three barrack beds, two of which were already occupied.

He looked at the two sleeping forms. What might they not be? Murderers, for aught he knew! Surely the dungeon and the rats with solitude would have been preferable to this!

'Tis over-late to see to the bedding to-night,' said Scroop, indicating the vacant plank bed. 'You will be softer than stones any way, and to-morrow you can have a flock mattress, an you like to pay a crown for it a fortnight.'

The occupant of one of the beds stirred a little, and finally turned round to look at these disturbers of his night's rest.

'Is this what you call a private chamber!' said Hugo, wrathfully. And, with a deep oath, he dragged himself across the room and flung himself down upon the barrack bed.

Scroop regarded him for a moment with a sarcastic grin, then shrugging his shoulders left the cell without any further remark, locking and bolting the door with

ostentatious noisiness which was not lost upon Hugo.

Disappointed as he was with his new quarters, however, to be free from the rats was a great gain. His two companions were silent enough, the room was dark, and Hugo, though wretched both in mind and body, was too young to lie awake long.

He slept soundly for some hours. When he awoke the room was dimly lighted by the pale moonbeams which struggled in through the small window. He looked round, fancying himself at Mondisfield; he stared at the heavy iron bars across the window, which stood out black and hard against the moonlight. It was not Mondisfield! Where was it? With a vague uneasiness he started up, but instantly felt the fetters upon his ankles. It was not Mondisfield! Good God! it was Newgate!

Once more he heard Randolph's cold voice, 'Are you aware that the penalty for

misprision of treason is imprisonment for life?' And fiends' voices seemed to take up the words and echo them in a jeering chorus, 'Here for life, for life! Here for life!'

He sprang up in a sort of frenzy—he struggled vainly to reach the barred but unglazed window high up in the wall from which the cool night air blew in. He rushed at the door, he pulled, strained, dragged at it as though by all his endeavours it could be induced to move a hairsbreadth. What was reason to one who had realised the meaning of lifelong imprisonment! The door must yield! Were mere wood and iron to prove more powerful than the passionate craving for freedom which seemed to rend his being? Once more back to the window, once more a perception that it was hopeless; then back to the door and the unavailing struggle with the merciless lock, which all his efforts would not so much as shake. It was all vain—vain! And he was here for life!

With a stifled cry, he threw himself face

downwards on the floor. Effort was useless, and yet this awful craving to get out seemed as though its fierceness would kill him. Panting, exhausted with the bodily exertion, and torn in pieces by that terrible revolt against his fate, he might have lain there for hours had not a voice fallen upon his ears and startled him into attention. Was it his fancy? Was it merely the recollection of some psalm he had heard at Mondisfield?

‘What if in prison I must dwell,
May I not there converse with Thee?
Save me from sin, Thy wrath and hell,
Call me Thy child, and I am free.
No bolts or bars can keep Thee out,
None can confine a holy soul,
The streets of heaven it walks about,
None may its liberties control.’

‘Whose words are those?’ he exclaimed, quieted for the moment, partly because they seemed like a message from Mondisfield, partly because there was something soothing in the rhythm and in the tone of the voice.

‘The words are Mr. Richard Baxter’s,’ said the voice. ‘And I, who, speak them, am one Francis Bampffield, a prisoner for conscience sake.’

With that the speaker rose, felt about for flint and steel, and in a minute had kindled a rushlight; then he came and bent over the prostrate form of his fellow-prisoner.

‘I heard not your entrance, sir,’ he said. ‘I slept soundly. Is there aught that I can do for you? You seem in sore distress.’

‘Distress!’ exclaimed Hugo, half raising himself and looking into the face of the old man who bent over him. ‘I am in prison for life, sir—for life!’ He broke into a discordant laugh, which speedily changed to uncontrollable sobbing, as he fell back once more into his former position.

‘I, too, am in prison for life,’ said Bampffield. ‘Be comforted; ’t will prove less irksome than you think for.’

‘No, no!’ cried Hugo, starting up again. ‘You are old, sir, or you could not say so. Oh! for the love of God, sir, tell me, is there no hope of escape? I must get out, or I shall die!’

The old frenzy was returning; once more he rushed blindly at the door, as though he would tear it from its hinges. Bampfield watched him for a minute with silent compassion; then, going up to him, he drew him away with gentle force, which Hugo was in no state to resist.

‘You look both ill and weary,’ he said, in his quiet, measured tones. ‘An you will put up with it, my bed is at your service. Lie down,—slumber will do more for you than I can.’

Hugo’s native courtesy returned to him, and in a voice which contrasted oddly with that of his passionate outbreak, he thanked Bampfield for his kindness, but would not hear of robbing him of his bed. However, the old man was not to be resisted. He took the law into his own hands, made

Hugo lie down, fetched him food and water, and forced him to swallow them, talking the while in a soothing, continuous sort of way.

‘Yes, as you say, I am old,’ he remarked — ‘old enough, I trow, to be your grand-sire. But you will accord me an old man’s privilege, and hearken to my experience. Black times you may have, but believe me none so black as the first night in gaol. Believe me, sir, there is naught so hard but custom lightens it. I speak not from hearsay; I speak that which I know, having been oft in gaol, and for long years. Men may imprison your body, but no man can against your will imprison you.’

Hugo was silent, musing over the words which fell strangely on his ear, since he was not accustomed to think much about any such matters as Bampfield hinted at.

The old man watched him keenly, wondering what crime had brought upon him so terrible a punishment. The pure face with its beautiful outlines, the dark grey

eyes with their deep thoughtful look, did not lend themselves readily to the idea of any crime at all. But he was too much of a gentleman to ask him any question, and indeed before long he saw that the new prisoner had fallen asleep, much as a child does after an outburst of passion. He did not realise how wonderful had been the relief of his presence, or what an immense influence his mere age possessed for one of Hugo's reverential nature. But he felt strangely drawn towards this new occupant of his prison-cell, and unspeakably thankful that one, who would effect no slight change in the monotonous life, bid fair to prove a welcome addition to their number.

CHAPTER IX.

GRIFFITH DOUBTFULLY REGARDS HUGO.

Suspicious among thoughts are like bats among birds, they ever fly by twilight.

BACON.

It was broad daylight when John Griffith, minister of Dunnings Alley Chapel, Bishopsgate Street, awoke. He glanced sleepily across the prison cell, vaguely wondering whether his friend Bampfield had yet risen, and perceiving some curious change as he looked, he rubbed his eyes vigorously, and looked again. Why, what was this? Instead of a hoary head, there was a mass of curly light brown hair. Where had his friend gone to? And who was this new-

comer? He rose hastily, but his curiosity had to remain unsatisfied, for he perceived that Bampfield was at his devotions at the further end of the cell, and the stranger slept as if nothing on earth would wake him. Griffith was almost irritated by the sight of his peaceful repose. This must be the graceless gallant who had stumbled in, likely enough half-drunk, the night before; he remembered the incident well enough now, and he remembered, too, the deep oath which he had uttered as he flung himself down upon the vacant bed. How he had managed to obtain possession of Bampfield's quarters was a mystery, and Griffith grudged them to him, and was not at all inclined to wish this intruder welcome.

‘How now! Bampfield!’ he exclaimed, as the old man rose from his knees, ‘have you been sleeping on boards? And did this godless, drunken blasphemer turn you from your own bed?’

Bampfield smiled.

‘Gently, good friend Griffith,’ he said. ‘Methinks those épithets scarce apply to our new friend.’

‘Friend!’ said Griffith, looking with scorn at the gay crimson doublet which the stranger had thrown off, and the costly lace cravat which lay beside it. ‘Friend! Bampfield! Nay, but a godless Whitehall idler, an I mistake not. You slept last night when he entered, but I saw him stagger in, drunk no doubt, and swearing at the gaoler with profane lips.’

‘Nay, he was not drunk, poor lad, but ill, and weary, and half-starved. Courtier, idler, swearer he may be, yet is there a grace and winsomeness about him which methinks is not all court breeding.’

‘You would see good in every living soul!’ said Griffith, impatiently, ‘I shall form my own judgment upon him. Is he like to remain here long?’

‘I trow that he will outlast both of us,’ said Bampfield, with a curiously pathetic smile. ‘We are old and grey-headed, but

yon poor boy is but nineteen, or at most twenty, and he too has lifelong imprisonment to face. I found him heart-broken last night, tearing and straining at the door as though he would open it or die.'

'Whereupon you offered him your bed,' said Griffith, 'and the grace and winsomeness of which you speak did not hinder the profane worldling from letting a venerable man of seventy sleep on a plank bed.'

'You wrong him,' said Bampffield. 'I forced him to take it; nor could I have slept after witnessing so sad a scene. I had better employment.'

'I have no patience with the rising generation!' said Griffith, vehemently. He could not add that he had no patience with his friend for spending half the night in prayer over the sorrows of an unknown stranger, but he relieved himself by inveighing against the depravity of youth in general, and of this youth in particular.

Hugo, disturbed by the voices, was

struggling to wake up; he had heard the last part of the conversation in a half dreamy state, and Griffith's vehement generality made him open his eyes. He looked round and saw a tall, gaunt, grey-haired man with a stern and hard expression. He was clad in the habit of a divine, and though he was beyond doubt a very worthy man, and though Hugo was quite aware of the fact, and was conscious too that he ought to be thankful enough to find himself in such good company, he nevertheless formed the strongest aversion to Dr. John Griffith at first sight.

'I wish you a good morning, sir,' said Griffith, bowing stiffly. 'Had I known that you were in need last night, I should gladly have afforded you any assistance in my power. But you entered this cell with profane words, to which, I bless God, these walls have not of late echoed.'

Now in those days swearing was a cultivated art; it was considered part of good breeding. Hugo, being of a quiet nature,

and more given to thinking than to talking, probably swore much less than most men; he had indeed been many a time taken to task by Randolph and by Denham for his want of brilliancy in this respect. To be now reproved for a single oath under exceptionally trying circumstances amazed him. Moreover, he resented the interference.

‘I am sorry to have disturbed you, sir,’ he replied, coldly. ‘As to modes of speech, my tongue is my own.’

He tried to rise, but fell back again with an irrepressible exclamation of pain. Bampfield, who had listened with regret to the words which had passed between his companions, now drew near to the bedside.

‘Are you rested?’ he asked, kindly. ‘Nay, I see you are still but weary.’

‘I have to thank you for some hours of forgetfulness,’ said Hugo, looking up at him gratefully.

‘Are you in prison for crime or for conscience sake?’ asked Griffith, sternly.

‘For both, sir,’ said Hugo, flushing painfully.

Griffith regarded him for a moment in silence.

‘That is impossible!’ he said, with stern emphasis. ‘Impossible, sir!’

An indescribable look stole over Hugo’s face; he glanced at Bampfield as though to appeal to him against this hard verdict.

‘You are still very weary?’ questioned Bampfield. ‘Is there naught that we can do for you?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Hugo, frowning with pain. ‘I am beaten almost to a jelly.’

‘Ha! how was that?’ said Griffith, with sudden interest, for he was a doctor of medicine as well as a divine. Then, his old antagonism to Hugo returning—‘But perhaps you deserved it.’

The muscles of the new-comer’s face worked convulsively; this ruthless handling of an old wound was hard to bear.

‘I—did deserve it,’ he said, in a low

voice, and therewith turned his face from the light, and was deaf to all other questions.

Bampfield looked reproachfully at his companion, and John Griffith softened a little towards the new-comer, reflected that he might have repented of his crime, and, turning away, began vigorously to make preparations for breakfast.

However, though Griffith's question had been heartless, it proved to be exactly the tonic which Hugo needed. Bampfield's kindness had saved him from blank despair, but that sharp, that torturing, 'Perhaps you deserved it,' recalled to him the past, and with the hatred of the past an almost passionate resolve that the future should be very different. What was it that had made him sink so low that night at Mondisfield? Love of life had, in truth, proved strong, but it was not merely love of life which had made him yield. Had another man held a pistol to his head, and given him the choice between death and crime, he would have

assuredly chosen death. The power had lain not in the pistol, but in Randolph; not in the mere thought of death, but in the thought of a violent death at his brother's hands.

He had allowed himself to be held in bondage by that stronger nature. Randolph had been to him as a god, and he, by yielding with tame and blind submission, by ceding to another what he had no right to cede—the direction of his will and his conscience—had proved himself to be less than a man. It flashed upon him as a sort of discovery that words which he had heard in a lifeless, mechanical way were no poetical image, but a stern reality, a fact as true for him in the seventeenth century as, long ago, to the listeners on the Eastern mountain-side. ‘No man can serve two masters.’ He would, to begin with, forfeit the right to be called ‘man’ at all,—would be a mere cipher, an incarnate compromise; and ultimately he must by the very nature

of things give himself wholly either to one or the other, either to the right master or the wrong. He knew well enough that he had of late vaguely desired to do right, that for months he had been also drawn, almost irresistibly, more and more under Randolph's influence. He had been sorely perplexed by the clashing of duties, but at the fatal moment had been quite well aware that he had deliberately chosen amiss.

It was not, however, till this miserable morning in Newgate that he saw all things clearly; realised that there is only one Master whom a man can serve without sinking into degrading slavery, only one Master whose service is perfect freedom. The old church prayer returned to his mind, the Latin version of which had till now been an enigma to him—

‘Quem nosse vivere.
Cui servire regnare.’

And hitherto he had not ‘Served,’ but had been dragged down by the power of cir-

cumstance, hitherto he had not 'Reigned,' overcoming by virtue of the Truth and the Right; he had lived in a despicable slavery,—nay, scarcely lived at all, so vague and misty had been his knowledge.

To pass from a shadowy belief in a sort of Fetish, to actual knowledge of a Living Being, is like passing from death into life—like throwing wide a closed casement, and letting the fresh air revive one panting for breath.

It seemed to Hugo as though the purity of Joyce, the charity of Bampfield, the thoughtful friendship of Mary Denham, the free forgiveness of Colonel Wharncliffe blended together and helped him to a vision of One whom he had vowed to serve manfully, but had not served,—One whom he had vaguely worshipped, but never before known.

Time, then, was nothing,—place was nothing! Bampfield had spoken truly—men might imprison the body, but here in Newgate one might 'Know' and 'Live,'

—might ‘Serve’ and ‘Reign.’ He could bear now to say those terrible words which last night had half maddened him,—‘Life-long imprisonment,’—could pray as he had never prayed before the words of Mary Denham’s collect.

He said no more about being beaten to a jelly, but got up, eager to begin his new life. He paused in tying the cravat which had excited John Griffith’s ire to help that worthy, who was in difficulties with a steaming sauce-pan full of porridge. He stifled his inclination to laugh at the portentous length of the grace which Dr. Griffith pronounced over the very frugal meal, and he accepted Bampffield’s offer of hospitality with gratitude, gulping down the tasteless and ill-cooked food with heroic resolution, and inwardly debating whether he might not in course of time improve upon Griffith’s cooking, and serve up porridge which savoured less of smoke and the pot.

‘Is the food supplied to prisoners?’ he

asked, anxious to find out what his expenses would be in his new abode.

‘A small quantity is supplied,’ said Bampfield, ‘but scarce sufficient to keep body and soul together. You can, however, purchase what you will. Nowhere is money a greater power than in prison.’

‘Ay, that I discovered last night,’ said Hugo. ‘It was not till the gaoler had cajoled me out of forty gold pieces that he brought me hither out of a pestilent dungeon.’

‘They ever get heavy premiums in that way,’ said Bampfield, ‘and even now you will be charged ten shillings and sixpence rental by Scroop, and one shilling each week by the female who cleans the room and makes the fires.’

Hugo looked grave. But ten more gold pieces remained within his purse, and if for mere bed and lodging he must pay fourteen shillings a week, his resources would ere long be exhausted. Moreover, there would be his share in lights and

coals and food to be thought of. The money would not last him much more than two months. Two months out of a life-time!

Presently when Griffith had retired to the further end of the cell to prepare a sermon, Bampfield heard all Hugo's story; he heard the outline of facts that is, and his age and experience, together with an innate perception of the new comer's character, enabled him to fill in the gaps which necessarily occurred in Hugo's narrative. Nor was it difficult to imagine the extraordinary ascendancy which the elder brother had exercised over the mind of the younger. Puritan as he was, Bampfield nevertheless discerned at once that Hugo was one of the artist type—receptive, responsive, by nature a worshipper; over such a character how easy it was to picture the mastery of a strong man, passionately loved. He could not but hope great things from one who could break such a chain, and Hugo's grief at the separation

from Randolph, which was more apparent by what he left unsaid than by any words which he could have uttered, touched the old man deeply.

‘Ay,’ he said, ‘separation from kith and kin, in belief and practice, is a hard thing to face, but it is what your Lord bore in His life. “Even His brethren did not believe in Him.” Many a time those who suffer for conscience sake will have to heal their smarts with those words.’

‘And you, sir?’ asked Hugo. ‘Did you too have this to bear? Tell me of those imprisonments of which you spoke last night.’

‘In good sooth, many are the friends whom I have lost,’ said Bampffield. ‘Think not that I blame them—nay, oft times thinking over it I blame myself; for did we live as we ought—did not our failings dim the Christ-light—let us hold what opinions we would, folks would be slow to leave us. My tale is but a short and uneventful one. I was born of an old and honourable

Devonshire family, and was educated at Wadham in the university of Oxford. My young days were cast in evil times; I was then a loyalist, and an ordained minister of the Church of England. My cure was at Sherbourne in Dorsetshire, and there I continued to read Common Prayer publicly longer than any other minister in Dorsetshire, for which I incurred some danger—it hath been ever my fortune to go with the losing side, you see!’

He smiled, a curiously pathetic smile, which touched Hugo.

‘At that time I was also prebendary of Exeter Cathedral. It was not till later that I found, as I thought, many matters in the Church which called loudly for reformation. Mr. Richard Baxter was the means of bringing me over to the parliamentary party, and soon after evil days began for us. The King returned, the Act of Uniformity was passed, and there was naught for me to do but to quit both my living and my prebend, being utterly dis-

satisfied with the conditions which it imposed. I was from that time forth a marked man, and soon after was apprehended and cast into gaol for worshipping God in my own family. I smile now at the remembrance. There were five-and-twenty of us thrust into one room with but one bed! However, we passed the time peacefully in religious exercises.'

'And did they keep you there long?' asked Hugo, with the keen interest of a hearer who can realise the situation.

'Nay, but a short time. However, freedom was not meant for me. I was again apprehended for preaching, for refusing to keep back the message entrusted to me, even though this free land had been bound in slavish chains by laws devised by Clarendon and approved by the King. That time I was in gaol eight years. 'Twas in Dorsetshire gaol, a gruesome place enough.'

'Did it seem very long?' asked Hugo, a little huskily.

'It was long, yet I knew that it was not

too long,—it was the training my Lord thought best for me. Moreover, no one could hinder my preaching in the gaol,—I preached every day.'

'And when you were liberated?' questioned Hugo.

'Then I wandered about the country again for awhile, gaining a hearing when and where I could, but I was again apprehended and cast into Salisbury gaol. After that, once more freed, I came to London and gathered a congregation first at the chapel in Devonshire Square, and later at Pinner's Hall. Last year I was preaching there when there broke in several officers, who dragged me down from my place and carried me off under guard to bring me before the Lord Mayor. I was here in Newgate after that for a time, but being released found myself in worse odour than ever, and shortly afterwards, in March of this year, I and my friend Dr. Griffith were both committed to Newgate for refusing the oaths of suprem-

acy and allegiance, and here are we like to remain the rest of our lives.'

Hugo mused for a while in silence. The story was perplexing to one of his way of thinking, but no one could for a moment doubt Bampffield's honesty, and what was more, his holiness. He had not yet seen enough of the world to realise that the sins of any body of men sooner or later cause a schism in that body,—that the Church by her sins lost many of her bravest and noblest sons, and that those who outside her pale fought against tyranny, and intolerance, and maddening restrictions were fighting on God's side. Instinctively, however, he honoured the zeal for truth, the scrupulous conscientiousness which the nonconformists had shown; instinctively, too, he realised that he must avoid all controversy, and be content to learn what he could from these two old men, whose experience had been so strange and varied.

Fortunately the beautiful reverence

which was one of his most marked characteristics stood him now in good stead, and kept peace in the cell where otherwise there must have been discord, seeing that nature and nurture had tuned the three so differently.

Bampfield had only just finished his story when the door was unlocked and Scroop entered, followed by a surly-looking prisoner, who carried Hugo's valise and lute case. The gaoler directed him to put them down on the barrack-bed which he had allotted last night to the new-comer, and then proceeded in his grim way to enlighten the owner as to various prison rules and regulations. Hugo could hardly listen to the fellow, so impatient was he to open the lute case. When at last the gaoler had departed, he began to tear open the straps and clasps with eager fingers, deaf to Griffith's questions, and mindful only of Joyce. The lid raised, he looked eagerly in and found, securely packed away beside his lute, three books:—a volume

containing five of Shakspeare's plays ; a copy of the ' Pilgrim's Progress,' but recently published ; and a little edition of St. John's gospel. On the fly-leaf of this last was written, in a clear, but tremulous handwriting,

' For my dear love. They are all the books I have.'

Tears rushed to Hugo's eyes, a passionate longing consumed him for one more sight of Joyce—Joyce, his sweet, true-hearted love ! Joyce who belonged to him, and to whom he belonged by right of that mysterious union of souls which no prison walls—not even the walls of this hellish Newgate—could sever. Unable to see the words which were to him so full of comfort, he pressed the book to his lips and kissed it fervently.

' Sir,' said John Griffith, sternly, ' I trust you take no rash oath. Tell me, I pray, why you thus irreverently press the holy book to lips which of late spake profane words.'

‘Beshrew me, sir, they shall speak such words no more,’ said Hugo, quickly, his rapture of love lending him a large generosity, which put up with the doctor’s interruption, and made his impatience of the previous night seem contemptible.

Bampffield glanced at him for a moment, a smile of sympathy illumining his worn features. This new-comer was already proving a blessing to him ; he had brought an atmosphere of youth and hope and love into the dreary cell which refreshed the old man greatly, and relieved the weary monotony of the prison life.

On the Saturday, however, when Hugo, somewhat cheered and already growing accustomed to his new quarters, took his lute and began to play, Bampffield’s conscience would not permit him to keep silence.

‘My friend,’ he said, ‘this is the Sabbath. Will you not keep it with me, and lay aside worldly things?’

Hugo, who would have done anything

to please the gentle old man, at once put by the lute and patiently listened to a series of readings and discourses, finishing with a debate between Griffith and Bampfield as to the observance of the seventh, or the first day of the week. But when, on the following day, Griffith took him sternly to task for reading Shakspeare, he was less patient. Not being accustomed to the Puritan method of observing Sunday, it seemed to him intolerable to be required all at once to keep both the rest-day of the seventh-day Christian and the rest-day of the Baptist. It needed all his innate courtesy to enable him to pass the two days in a way which should not hurt the feelings of either of the old men, and on the Monday he was so chafed and wearied by the restraint that he felt ready to quarrel with everybody and everything.

It was some relief to be allowed to take an hour's walk. One of the privileges of this part of Newgate consisted in the possession of a paved passage running between

the outer wall and the building itself, a dreary enough place paved with purbeck stone, and running to a length of some fifty feet or more. It was something, however, even to be in the open air, within hearing of the life and bustle of Newgate Street, and Hugo walked up and down, working off some of his weariness and despondency by the help of rapid and mechanical exercise.

As he paced to and fro, a stranger happened to enter the court at the further end. Visitors frequented Newgate all day long in those times, and consorted freely with the prisoners ; for although the privations and discomforts of prison life in the seventeenth century were much greater than in the present day, there was a sort of rude liberty and license permitted which would scandal the stern disciplinarians of our time.

The visitor was a man who quickly arrested the attention. There was something unusual about his person and mien

which made everyone look a second time at him. He moved with a peculiar ease and dignity, his face was calm, serene, and thoughtful; he seemed to walk the world as an acute observer of men and manners, but there was about him nothing of the censorious critic. Before all things he was sympathetic,—in fact, he observed everyone with such deep sympathy that he practically lived with them, seeming almost to lose the sense of his own personality, so deeply was he absorbed in the life around him. He leant now against the grim doorway at the entrance to the paved yard, his easy attitude contrasting curiously with the gait of the downcast prisoner, who tramped doggedly to and fro.

Betterton—for it was none other than the great tragedian—watched every motion of the walker, watched keenly, but with that living sympathy which distinguishes the artist from the scientist.

A slight figure, clad in a crimson cloth doublet, black silk hose, and broad black

hat, from which trailed a long yellow ostrich feather ; a walk at once dejected and desperate, slightly uneven, too, as though the wayfarer were recovering from some illness ; the head bent, the eyes fixed on the ground, the hands clasped behind him, the iron shackles which hung loosely on the shapely ankles clanking dismally at each step. The face he could not clearly see, it was hidden by the wide brim of the hat, until just as the prisoner had taken his third turn up and down some sound made him look up hastily. The actor, to his intense surprise, saw before him the strange, broad-browed face, with the great grey eyes, and the indefinable something which raised it above other faces. There could be no mistake—he was certain that it must be the young amateur tenor, the favourite at Will's, who not many weeks since had been applauded to the echo in very different circumstances. He stepped forward hastily.

‘Mr. Wharncliffe!’ he exclaimed, holding out his hand.

Hugo clutched at it as a drowning man clutches at a straw. To hear a familiar voice, to see the well-known and kindly face of Betterton in that dismal abode gave him a momentary thrill of rapture. He was not long in telling the actor all his tale, and Betterton listened with that sympathetic silence which is better far than words.

‘What can I do for you?’ he said, at the close.

‘Tell me first, and you will, what arrests have been made,’ said Hugo, anxiously.

‘Many warrants have been issued,’ said Betterton. ‘But I have heard naught of arresting any leading man save Lord Russell.’

‘Lord Russell!’ exclaimed Hugo, in astonishment.

‘Ay, he is in the Tower and to be brought to his trial shortly.’

‘And Colonel Sydney? Heard you aught of him?’

‘Nay, he is yet at large. I saw him yesternight, nor have I heard of his being involved in the plot.’

‘God be thanked!’ said Hugo, his face brightening. ‘You asked what you could do for me, sir. I should be greatly beholden to you an you would go to Colonel Sydney’s house, see him privately, and tell him all you have now heard from me.’

‘I will see him with pleasure,’ said Berterton. ‘And at once.’

‘Tell him, sir, that I will not risk writing, fearing to involve him in danger. But beg him to send me some word of counsel, and, if it may be, one of forgiveness.’ His voice faltered, he half broke down, but resumed, after a moment’s pause,

‘Tell him I know that I deserve to be despised by him—that I will bear it as a just punishment if it must be. But tell him, too, that I would die for him, that I would live in torture for him. Nay, tell

him not that, 'tis like the false disciples who afterwards fled. Tell him no words of mine, but——' he grasped the actor's arm, looking into his eyes with an entreaty which Betterton never forgot, 'but make him understand.'

'I will do my best,' said Betterton, simply. 'I see well what your love for Mr. Sydney is, and can at least tell him of that.'

'Ah!' broke in Hugo, 'you will never know what he is—never! He has been to me friend, guide, teacher—well-nigh father—to me who was naught to him—naught but a stranger. My God! and it is such an one that men deem cold and harsh—a traitor—one to be hunted from the land he loves!'

'Time's up, sir!' shouted a grim voice.

The agitation, the light of love and devotion died out of Hugo's face, and a stern look settled down upon his features.

'Farewell,' he said, grasping Betterton's hand. 'Farewell, and thank you.'

Then with a curious dignity of obedience he followed his imperious gaoler, and disappeared within the gloomy pile.

The actor watched him out of sight, brushed away a tear from his eyes, and left the prison-yard looking graver than when he entered it.

CHAPTER X.

SYDNEY AND BETTERTON.

WILL.—I pray you, what thinks he of our estate?

KING H.—Even as men wrecked upon a sand, that
look to be washed off the next tide.

King Henry V.

It is a curious fact, but a fact borne out by the experience of most people, that the great actors in the drama of life, the characters who take the leading parts and the difficult *rôles*, are, as a rule, calmer and quieter in face of peril and in time of commotion than the lesser men who play humbler parts, and who, while involved in slighter risk, seem to be much more troubled about it. On that bright summer morning which followed Betterton's visit

to Newgate most men in any way connected with the Whig party were conscious that they were treading on the brink of a volcano. The bravest could not but be apprehensive at such a time; the most courageous found it hard to live quietly on in their homes knowing that at any moment a pretext might be made for issuing a warrant against them. The country was stirred to its depths by the news of the plot; panic reigned supreme. Yet in Algernon Sydney's study all was calm enough on that Tuesday morning, the 26th of June.

The calmness stuck Betterton not a little when, ushered in by Ducasse, he found himself in the presence of the Republican. The room, somewhat meagrely furnished, seemed to bear the owner's history stamped upon it. It was lacking in the grace and neatness and comfort betokening womanly care. In the prevailing shabbiness there were, nevertheless, tokens that the owner, though poor, was of noble birth, for here

and there a bit of cumbrous family plate was to be seen ; the Leicester arms were blazoned upon the brown morocco of more than one volume lying on the table, and relics of Penshurst might have been noted among the ordinary furniture of a London house. Present, too, were signs that Sydney was one of the wanderers of the earth. An old trunk full of letters and papers stood open beside the writing-table ; a pillow-beer—friend of many a weary journey—lay hard by ; while the literary tastes of the patriot were plainly evidenced by what for those days was a large collection of books.

Betterton had a moment in which to take in all these details, and to become conscious of an atmosphere of hard work which pervaded the room. Sydney was so absorbed in his writing that he had not noticed the opening of the door, and his servant crossed the room and mentioned the visitor's name a second time before he looked up. For one moment the actor

caught the two faces full in the bright light which streamed in from the window. The face of the faithful valet bearing traces of care and harassing anxiety, the face of the patriot a little sterner than it was wont to be, but pervaded by that majestic calm which seems to be the panoply wherewith strong souls are indued in time of trouble. There flashed across Betterton's mind the description of a noble man in words which he had often spoken upon the stage—

‘E’en as just a man as e’er my conversation coped
Withal . . . That man who is not passion’s slave.’

It was not often that such an one was to be met with; yet here was a man, even in this vile age, noble of soul and pure of life.

— The slight air of hauteur was evidently an inherited expression; it was not in accord either with Sydney's life or with his principles. Moreover, it was only noticeable when the face was in repose. He received the actor with perfect courtesy, which soon deepened into anxious

interest and that strange rapid intimacy born of trouble. Hugo could not by any possibility have selected a better messenger than the great tragedian. He told his tale with a simple directness, with a vividness of description, with an absence of personal comment, but with a living sympathy which was irresistible. Sydney was deeply moved, nor did he even for a moment take a harsh view of Hugo's fall. The difficulty and the struggle he had long foreseen, the failure he had half feared, but he had a prophetic consciousness that such a nature as Hugo's would not for ever lie in slavery.

'You will send him the word of counsel he craves?' said the actor.

'Nay, rather I will see him myself,' said Sydney, quickly. 'Would that I could lay hands on that caitiff brother of his, and give him a piece of my mind. 'Tis passing strange what diverse shoots spring from the same stem.'

And he smiled rather bitterly, think-

ing perhaps of the grave differences which had been the cause of so much strife and contention between him and both his brothers.

‘Pardon me,’ said Betterton, ‘but will not a visit from you be a source of mutual danger? To bring you into any risk would be small satisfaction to Mr. Wharncliffe.’

‘You are right,’ said Sydney, ‘I spoke hastily, forgetting that we live in an age which maketh truth pass for treason. Ay, I must not visit him, ’twould make his lot harder. Yet, poor lad, I would fain have spoken with him. Hugo is one of those who are over-pure for the age they live in, and, from Him of Nazareth downwards, life is hard to such.’

‘If there be aught that I can do in the way of bearing message or letter I am entirely at your disposal,’ said Betterton.

‘I am very sensible of your courtesy,’ said Sydney. ‘Perchance that were the best way, at least till the worst of this

panic hath passed by. I will write to him at once, for indeed—*carpe diem*—who can tell but that I may be even as he ere the sun goes down.'

He smiled sadly, but with the calmness of one who has passed a lifetime in constant risks and perils.

'You deem yourself indeed in danger, sir?' asked Betterton, marvelling at the serenity with which such words had been spoken.

'I have never known what it is to be out of danger, Mr. Betterton, for these many years,' replied Sydney. 'When I only looked over a balcony to see what passed at the election of the sheriffs, I was indicted for a riot. And I am well-informed that had the Meal Tub Sham succeeded, I should have been involved in it.'

'Yet such a scheme would have sorted ill with your likings, sir.'

'In truth you say well,' said Sydney, with a bitter smile. 'As I told His Ma-

jesty at Whitehall, nothing could be more repugnant to my feeling than a measure which must eventually unite the papists and the crown. But he that is unpopular must not look for justice in our land. For such an one there is naught but exile.'

'Will you not once more be warned, and make good your escape?' said the tragedian.

'You echo the words that my faithful valet dins into my ears day and night,' said Sydney. 'But look you, Mr. Betterton, I am growing old, and I am weary of these endless precautions, and exile is hateful to me, and my country over dear. If I flee I shall but leave my heart behind me. That may answer at five-and-twenty, but at sixty it is not so well. Now, an you will permit me, I will pen a note to young Mr. Wharncliffe.'

He sat down at his writing-table, leaving the actor time for a further study of the room and its owner, this dauntless patriot, whose lot it had been to win the

undying hatred of the court party, the fear of all half-hearted and timid men, and the fervent devoted love of a very few. Presently he drew forth his purse, examining its contents with the air of one who is accustomed to find it lighter than might be wished. He had in truth known what it was to be 'poor even to misery,' and though at present able to live upon the small sum which his father had left him, and which after long legal disputes had at length been pronounced his, he would fain have sent much more substantial help to Hugo than was at all within his power.

'You will then kindly be the bearer of this letter and purse,' he said, turning to Betterton. 'I am very grateful to you for your help. As to the purse, he must accept it as from a father. I see plainly enough that his brother's aim will be to keep him in such sore discomfort that he shall at length succumb and own what he knows. Tell him he must use the money

to defeat that unjust end, so will his independence not be wounded or his pride offended.'

Then, with a few more words of gratitude, a last message for Hugo, a finely turned compliment which, for all his ordinary bluntness of speech, proved the Republican to be a polished man of the world, Betterton found his mission ended, and the interview over.

After he had left the house, Sydney paced to and fro in his study for some time, wrapped in anxious thought. Hugo was very much upon his mind, for he felt a great responsibility for him, knowing well how large a share he had had in forming his character and his opinions. Betterton's description of the prisoner returned to him again and again, and ever with a fresh pang of sorrow and regret. There was something indescribably mournful to him in the thought of that young life doomed to long imprisonment. After a while Ducasse entered and began to lay the

table for the one-o'clock dinner, and Sydney sat down and began to eat, more to please the faithful servant than because he had any appetite. Troubles were thickening day by day, and he was heavy of heart.

'Ah, sir,' said Ducasse, 'I could have made you a better omelette than this, and we were once more in France.'

'All things are best there in thy mind, from thy master down to eggs and poultry,' said Sydney, smiling. 'But I am growing old, Ducasse, and would fain end my days here, even though things right themselves but slowly in our foggy island.'

'Ah, sir,' said the valet, ''tis ever "the land, the land" you speak of. But of what use is the land, if monsieur's countrymen will but give him a six-foot strip in a cemetery, or perchance so much as will serve for a prison cell. Ah, sir, think of yourself, and flee while yet there is time.'

'But look you, Joseph, in France I do

but vegetate to no profit. Whereas here I may perchance serve my country, if free, in a hundred ways; if in prison, as an ensample to future ages; if on the scaffold, as one of the martyrs from whose blood shall spring one day our true Republic.'

'Ah, sir, it is of yourself that I think,' said the valet, sadly.

— 'Thou art but a Frenchman, after all, Joseph! Yet, methinks, after these long years we have lived together, thou shouldst know me better,' said Sydney, smiling. 'Hark, there is a knock without. Go, see who calls. I have as little stomach for visitors as for my dinner this morning.'

Ducasse left the room, and Sydney let his knife and fork lie idle for a minute, leaning back in his chair with the air of one who is glad for once to be free from even friendly inspection. An intense quietness reigned in the room,—one of those timeless pauses which occur sometimes in life; for the moment his brain

was at rest, his anxious thoughts were lulled; a breath of soft, warm June air floated in from the open window, and gave him a distinct feeling of pleasure; a bee went buzzing about the room, and finally settled upon his plate. Outside there were voices, but he did not heed them; outside were steps,—but what then? Ducasse, perhaps, had not been able to get rid of some importunate visitor. The door was thrown open, he glanced round. What did it all mean? The valet stood there with blanched face, and announced nobody,—yet the footsteps drew nearer, an officer entered, bowed slightly, advanced and touched him on the shoulder.

All at once that strange hush was broken, the stillness, the calm, the timeless pause ended, and the room seemed in a tumult, above which there rang, sharply and gratingly, the words,

‘Algernon Sydney, I arrest thee in the King’s name on a charge of high treason.’

With a swift pang, he realised that the

minute of intense stillness had been his last minute of freedom in this world, and involuntarily his eyes followed the bee, as, alarmed by the noise and the sudden intrusion of officers and men, it flew noisily round the room and out beyond through the open window.

A fresh knock without, and yet another unwelcome visitor. Sir Philip Lloyd entered, greeting the prisoner courteously enough.

‘I have an order, Mr. Sydney, to seize all papers found within your house,’ he said. ‘And I must therefore search the premises.’

Sydney bowed acquiescence.

‘Lay covers for two,’ he said, turning to Ducasse. ‘These gentlemen will dine with me—unless,’—turning to Sir Philip Lloyd—‘you think it not meet to take salt with one arrested on such a charge?’

There was a sort of veiled irony in his tone, but the officers could not well refuse his hospitality, and the strange trio sat

down to the table, and Ducasse waited on them, having much ado to keep his eyes clear enough to see the plates and dishes. Everyone, save the Republican himself, seemed embarrassed. Throughout the meal he maintained a stately composure, talking with the officers as though they had been ordinary guests, and apparently doing his best to set them at their ease. Perhaps, however, their abashed manner was not altogether ungrateful to him, and he was quite human enough to enjoy the consciousness of being master of the situation.

Dinner over, Sir Philip Lloyd, nothing loth, set about the more congenial task of searching the house. What papers there were, however, were all in the study, and after a vain quest in the upper regions he returned, and began to ransack the drawers and cupboards of an oaken cabinet, while his men seized upon the papers lying on the writing-table, and stowed them away with the others in the open trunk and the pillow-beer.

This part of the proceedings tried Sydney's patience considerably. His dark eyes flashed as he noted the seizure by these strangers of all that was most private to him. Ducasse could see that his master had much ado to keep back a torrent of angry remonstrance. He held his peace, however, sitting somewhat rigidly in his high-backed chair at the dinner-table, and only following every movement with lynx eyes.

At length Sir Philip had made what selection of papers he deemed fit, a cord was placed round both the trunk and the pillow-beer, and Ducasse was despatched for wax and candle. The men dragged forward the heavy package.

'Bring the light hither,' said Sir Philip; and the valet, doing as he was bid, held the wax and the light close to his master.

'What is this for?' asked Sydney, with a shade of hauteur in his tone.

'I desire that you put your seal upon these papers, Mr. Sydney,' said Sir Philip.

‘They shall not be opened but in your presence.’

Sydney drew the signet-ring from his finger, but then hesitated. Had not something of this sort passed at Colonel Mansell's rooms, when he was accused of complicity in the Meal Tub Plot? And had not those who searched contrived to slip a treasonable paper in among the private documents?

‘You will affix your seal in this place,’ said Sir Philip, in a voice of authority, and indicating the knotted cord.

‘Pardon me, sir, I shall do nothing of the kind,’ said Sydney, with asperity. And, while everyone stared at him, he put his ring on again with great calmness and deliberation.

Sir Philip shrugged his shoulders, and, looking but ill pleased, put his own seal upon the cord.

‘As you please, Mr. Sydney,’ he said, coldly. ‘We did but consult your own convenience. A coach is in waiting, and

we must make no further delay, since you are to be examined before the Privy Council.'

Sydney bowed.

'My hat and cloak, Joseph.' Then, as the valet returned, he spoke a few words of gratitude and affection to him in his native tongue, grasped his hand, bade him God-speed, and turned abruptly towards his captors. 'Gentlemen, I am ready. Bear me whither you will.'

CHAPTER XI.

A MIDNIGHT ESCAPE.

I shall not want false witness to condemn me,
 Nor store of treasons to augment my guilt;
 The ancient proverb will be well effected :
 A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.

King Henry VI.

‘JOYCE, my love, your father would speak with you,’ said Mrs. Wharncliffe, softly opening the door of the bed-room shared by Joyce and little Evelyn, and closing it as softly behind her.

The household had retired as usual, and it had been deemed prudent to tell none of the servants, save the old nurse, that Colonel Wharncliffe intended that night

to make his escape. A secret shared among many is always in danger of being betrayed, and faithful devotion to a master does not always inspire prudence, or entirely crush the love of gossip.

It was past ten o'clock, but Joyce, knowing that she should be summoned ere long, had made no preparations for the night. She stood at the open casement, looking out into the twilight garden, her arms resting on the sill, and her face propped between both hands. Without, all was wonderfully still; not a breath of wind stirred the tall dark elms, no nightingale's song broke the silence, no wakeful bird stirred in its nest, no sound of human life fell upon the ear. A heavy dew had fallen, there was a delicious balmy freshness in the air which made breathing itself a delight, and from far distant fields was wafted the fragrance of the newly-cut hay. The calmness of Nature no longer irritated Joyce as it had done on the previous morning, when she had run out to sink

the book in the moat. Since then she had lived through so much that all her thoughts and perceptions were changed; she had passed from childhood to womanhood, had learnt what it was both to love and to hate. Since then, moreover, she had caught a glimpse of the peace which remains unbroken, in spite of earthly tumult and strife, and the peaceful summer night seemed to her a type of the Infinite and Eternal.

She had been crying, but she dried her tears hastily on hearing her mother's voice, and when she turned round a sudden smile of delight shone in her eyes, for she saw to her astonishment that the door had again been softly opened and her father himself stood there.

'I want a few words with you, little daughter,' he said, quietly, stooping to kiss her forehead as he spoke. 'We will come together to the south parlour; but first I will bid Evelyn farewell. No, do not rouse her, 'tis better she should sleep, poor little maid.'

Joyce had to walk to the window once more that she might furtively wipe her eyes, while her father and mother bent over the little sleeping child. When she looked round again, she saw her father kneel down for an instant beside Evelyn; he kissed her rosy cheek, her hair, her little uncovered arm, then he rose quietly, put his arm round his wife, and led the way through the dark and silent house, Joyce stealing after them with a full heart. Slowly and noiselessly they made their way down the broad oak staircase with its many turns, Joyce counting the familiar steps in each flight lest she should stumble and make a noise; then on through the ghostly-looking hall with its white flagstones and its dusky gallery, and its haunting recollections of the previous day. Joyce shuddered and crept closer to her mother, wondering if those terrible sounds would always torment her as she passed by. It was a relief to be in the light and warmth of the south parlour; it

was a relief to be quite alone with her father, for Mrs. Wharncliffe left them, having many preparations to make.

For a minute Colonel Wharncliffe did not speak. He found that the words he intended to have spoken to Joyce would not come readily to his lips. How could he tell this child that she was much too young to know her own mind, when all the time she was raising to his, eyes which were full of a strange new depth and tenderness? How could he say that love was not for her yet awhile, when love had already added womanly dignity to the child-like face? Instead, his thoughts went back to the far past.

‘Thou art just like thy mother, little maid,’ he said, stroking the soft, rounded cheek tenderly. ‘And so thy kinsman hath told thee of his love, is it not so?’

‘Ay, father.’

‘And what did my daughter say when he told her?’

‘I kissed him, father.’

Colonel Wharncliffe smiled in spite of himself.

‘And didst own thy love?’

‘Ay, father, I did say I loved him; it was the truth,’ said Joyce, blushing vividly.

‘Ah, my little maid,’ said the father, drawing her closer to him, ‘dost realise that love brings pain with it? An thou givest away thy heart thus early, thou canst never again play light-hearted and free like thy sisters.’

‘I do not want to be free, father, this is better,’ said Joyce, shyly, yet with a certain sweet decision in her tone.

‘God help you, poor child; I see but a sad time before you!’ said the colonel, with a deep sigh. ‘Say that I make my escape now and stay abroad till the danger is past and the country at rest again, that will avail naught to lessen Randolph’s hatred. Nothing can free me from his enmity, nothing can save Hugo from his brother’s wrath so long as he shields me by silence.’

‘But Hugo never thought it would be otherwise, father,’ said Joyce, with a little quiver in her voice. ‘He has never expected aught besides ; nor have I.’

‘And thus my little maid hath half plighted herself to a life of sorrow and trouble.’

‘Nay, but to Hugo,’ she replied, with a thrill of eagerness in her voice which did not escape the father’s notice. ‘Not to sorrow, but to him, and afterwards let come what will.’

Very sadly he watched the sweet, eager face, with its light of love and devotion ; he, with his fatherly desire to see her happy, free from care, and in perfect safety ; he, with his manly longing to shield her from danger and suffering, could not understand that the long vista of pain and uncertainty did not in the least daunt her—seemed, on the contrary, rather to stimulate her love. For Joyce was a true woman, and the crown of a woman’s love is the bearing of pain for and with the one she loves.

There was silence for a while. At length Colonel Wharncliffe spoke.

‘Child,’ he said, ‘I cannot see before me ; all is blank mist save this one step which I must take ere morn, to leave home and country. I can see no future for myself or for you, and do I try to think and scheme for you and the rest my fears distract me. My life is in peril, and, if I were dead, I know not what might become of you children. I believe that Hugo would strive to make you a good and worthy husband. But, Joyce, the times are evil ; nay, child, thy pure heart cannot see the perils that I know of. I am saying naught against thy lover, but the times are evil, and he hath been over much at Whitehall.’

‘Yet would he never take me to the court. Long ago he said that. He said after the duel it were no fit place for me.’

‘Hugo may not be able to help it,’ said the colonel. ‘A King’s commands are not lightly neglected. The world is an evil

place, and my little white country-rose, for all her whiteness, might get sullied with the foul atmosphere of the court. Joyce,'—he took her hands in his and held them fast—'Joyce, my child, if ever temptation should come to you, remember this, the love of your father and mother may shield you from much, and the love of your husband may shield you from more, but there is no invincible shield save the love of God Himself.'

Tears rushed to her eyes, and she trembled from head to foot.

'Nay, sweet,' he said, putting his arm round her, 'I meant not to affright thee. Tremble not. That *is* invincible.'

After that no word passed between them for some time, but in the silence Joyce learnt many things, little dreaming that the father whose strong arm encircled her was learning too, and perchance a harder lesson.

'Thou wilt take care of thy mother while I am away,' he said, after a time.

‘She will need fresh help and comfort in many ways. Let that be thy charge, little Joyce. Do thou be her sunshine while I am gone.’

‘Evelyn would shine better,’ said Joyce, doubtfully.

‘And thou wouldst then let the clouds gather in peace,’ said the colonel, smiling. ‘Nay, I would fain leave thee as thy mother’s special helper; so will two birds be killed with one stone, as the proverb hath it, and my little daughter will not let herself pine away in a green and yellow melancholy.’

Joyce smiled faintly.

‘And you will send for us ere long,’ she said. ‘Why should not we be with you in Holland?’ Then, remembering that Holland was further from Newgate than Mondisfield, would fain have unsaid her words.

The father read it all in her face, and felt a sharp stab of pain. How absolutely in that brief time she had given her heart

away! It hurt him a little, even while he recognised that it was both natural and inevitable.

‘I cannot tell how that may be,’ he said. ‘I cannot see any future; we must be content to leave it a blank.’

Poor Joyce! the words struck to her heart with a deathly chill. No future! and such a heart-breaking present! The thought of Hugo faded a little in her mind, and she remembered only that her father was going forth alone to brave the perils of the way, that she might perhaps never see him again, and that but now she had grudged the thought of sharing his exile.

‘Take me with you, father,’ she sobbed, clinging to him like a frightened child. ‘Go not alone thus—take me with you.’

‘Bless thee for the thought, sweet one, but it may not be,’ he said, caressing her. Then, as his wife returned to the room, ‘Dear heart, I shall leave you with Joyce

as my deputy, Joyce is to be her mother's special child till my return. What! is all ready? Then let us be going. Delay doth but make things harder.'

Outside in the passage a lamp stood on an old wooden chest, and beside it the saddle-bags and the valise which the colonel was to take with him. Betty, Damaris, Frances, and Robina were in waiting, cloaked and hooded, and Betty came and tied on Joyce's blue hood for her, and took the little sister's cold hand in hers as they followed their father and mother down the drive, across the moat, and into the stable-yard.

Robina ran on quickly that she might speak to and quiet the old watch-dog; then, assured that Nettle would not betray them, followed her sisters into the stable, where, with Frances to hold the lantern, the other three girls saddled their father's horse. Colonel Wharncliffe, standing in the doorway with his wife, watched the scene with a sore heart; the dusky stable

with its high roof lost in shadow, the patient steed, the lantern held up high by one of the dark-robed girls, and shedding its yellow light on the others as they deftly arranged saddle and bridle. He fancied that the brightest gleam of all fell upon Joyce, revealing the sweet face with over-bright eyes and tremulous lips; she was working away at straps and buckles with a nervous energy which strove to banish the thought of the parting—but the parting had to come.

Ere long the good steed was ready, and Robina led him carefully out into the yard beneath the tall elm-trees.

‘With Merlin’s help,’ said the colonel, stroking the glossy mane of his horse, ‘I ought to be at Harwich not long after sunrise, and at Harwich there will, I think, be small difficulty in getting a ship to Amsterdam. Farewell, dear heart. Keep up your courage, and be not troubled if you do not hear from me. Trust me to write by the first opportunity.’

After that no one spoke. In dead silence he embraced them, mounted his horse, and rode out into the night. Those who were left behind stood quite still—no one stirred, no one cried ; they just waited there listening with painful intentness to the sound of the horse's hoofs, gradually growing fainter and more faint. At length they all knew that there was nothing more to wait for, the last sound had died away in the distance, and the summer wind stirring in the elm-trees seemed like a deep, sudden sigh as though Mondisfield knew that its master had gone forth into exile. Then one long, quivering, half-restrained sigh escaped the mother, and she was glad to feel a little, soft hand steal into hers. Were not her children left to her—doubly left? She must live for them!

‘Come, my children!’ she said, quietly. ‘Close the stable door, Damaris, and let us go back to bed. Nurse shall bring you all a sack-posset.’

So they went back to the deserted house,

and Colonel Wharncliffe rode on towards Harwich, well knowing that many perils beset his path.

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE NATIONAL THANKSGIVING.

With whom an upright zeal to right prevails,
More than the nature of a brother's love.

King Henry VI.

THE summer had passed, and the house in Norfolk Street, which had been closed for long months owing to the absence of the family, once more began to show signs of life. Shutters were thrown back, windows opened, and in due time the old family coach rolled up to the door, to the delight of three dirty little boys who left off playing with the mud in the gutter to watch the arrival of the grandees. Rupert, resplendent in sad-coloured cloth faced with

green velvet, old Lady Merton, Sir William's sister, and lastly Mary, who had been by no means sorry to leave the country and return under Lady Merton's guardianship to London. Sir William and Lady Denham had gone to the Bath and were not to return till Sir William's gout had been cured.

Letters were rare in those days, and yet Mary had been filled with an uneasy wonder that the long summer months had brought no news of Hugo. The whole family had left London soon after Randolph and Hugo had gone to Longbridge Hall, and no one had heard from either of the brothers since. True, Lady Merton's lonely old manor house in Warwickshire was so remote that one never did expect any news there; but the vague rumours as to the Rye House plot, and the curious silence on Hugo's part had troubled Mary not a little. More than once she pondered over that strange confession he had made to her in the preceding autumn, more than

once she wondered how the case of conscience he had put to her could have anything to do with himself and Randolph.

Following her aunt up the broad stone steps and into the somewhat dingy passage beyond, she saw in an instant that upon the marble table outside the parlour door, lay a letter directed in Hugo's clear but rather cramped handwriting,

*'To Rupert Denham, esquire,
Att His House in Norfolk Street.'*

'Did Mr. Wharncliffe leave this to-day?' she asked, turning to old Thomas the butler, with whom she was a great favourite.

'Mr. Wharncliffe, mistress!' said the old man, raising his eyebrows. '"Twas not Mr. Wharncliffe who brought it. 'Twas one day last July, and one of the sour-faced Puritan ministers brought it to the door. I took him to be a Muggletonian, for he had the ways of them.'

'How?' asked Mary, forgetting her anxiety for a moment.

‘Why, mistress, I did but keep him a few minutes on the step, and he had but knocked three times, and, when he taxed me with not minding my business better, I made bold to tell him he’d do well to mind his; whereupon he damned me to all eternity.’

Mary laughed.

‘Perchance it was Muggleton himself. What said you to him, Thomas?’

‘Why, mistress, I said that would be as the Lord pleased, and reminded him, as the proverb hath it—“Cusses come home to roost.” I thought his letter might bide its time, knowing that Mr. Rupert would not care to pay for damnations on delivery, for I made sure it was from the minister himself.’

Mary longed to hear the contents of the letter, but was obliged to show Lady Merton to the guest-chamber, and then to take off her travelling dress and put on her white evening gown, that she might not show any indiscreet desire for news of

Hugo, awakening thereby her aunt's suspicion, and Rupert's love of teasing.

She thought she would tell Rupert of the Muggletonian's interview with the butler, and then, quite composedly and casually, ask how Hugo had come to employ so strange a messenger. But when she entered the parlour, and saw her cousin standing in the window still perusing the letter, something in his face changed all her plans. For Rupert, the merry, careless, light-hearted cousin, who was never grave for two minutes together, was reading the letter with an expression of such deep concern on his face as she had never before seen.

‘What is it, Rupert?’ she asked, breathlessly. ‘What is the matter?’

He looked up, and she saw that there were tears in his eyes.

‘’Tis from Hugo,’ he said, hoarsely. ‘He has got into trouble over this cursed plot—he is in Newgate.’

‘In Newgate!’ she repeated, faintly.
‘Hugo in Newgate!’

‘Ay, of all folk under the sun!’ cried Rupert, passionately. ‘Or rather he was there months ago, may be yet alive perchance. Oh, why did that old fool forget to send me the letter?’

‘He knew not it was from Hugo,’ twas brought hither by some Muggletonian who offended him. I suppose Thomas kept it back out of malice to the bearer.’

Rupert damned poor Thomas even more vehemently and explicitly than the Muggletonian had done, while Mary caught eagerly at the first sheet of the letter, and read Hugo’s account of what had passed at Mondisfield; then, half-blinded with tears, was obliged to let Rupert make out the rest, which he did not without difficulty, for Hugo had written in haste.

‘Tidings have reached me this day,’ he read, ‘that Lord Russell is to be executed for the plot, Lord Howard of Escrick—

said to be one of the cabal of six—having saved his own neck by swearing against his friend. And, Rupert, this is what they would fain have me do. There are but two ways out of this hell, and God preserve me from taking either of them! I must betray Colonel Wharncliffe, or I must promise to bear witness against Colonel Sydney.

‘Yesternight came to me one whom I take to be an attorney, and urged me much to come forward at Colonel Sydney’s trial to prove his disaffection to the government, first seeking to entangle me by skillfully framed questions, and then dealing out both threats and promises of reward. Seeing that the rewards shall never be earned by me, I take it the threats will be put into execution, and that belike, I shall be once more thrust into yet straiter confinement. Therefore come to me as soon as may be, for at present I can see you, being in that part of Newgate they call the castle. I have written boldly come, and

yet perchance you will not deem it fitting to visit one who is implicated in such an affair. However, though Sir William deems himself a Tory, I know right well that he lets not affairs of state interfere with his friendships, else had he not been friends with Colonel Sydney, to whom as you know he introduced me at the first, even while warning me of his views. They tell me though that the whole country is stirred by this so-called plot, and I know not how far the atmosphere of Norfolk Street may be changed, only I have great hope that friendship will be over strong for love of party, and that you will come. An you love me, bring me what news there is of Colonel Sydney. Mr Betterton saw him on the morning of his arrest, and brought me word of it. Since that I have heard naught. Nor has Jeremiah made any answer to a letter which Mr. Betterton's man was to bear to him, from which it seems to me most like that Randolph intercepted the said letter. From him I

have no sign whatever, nor am like to. Come to me soon, for I am heavy-hearted, and methinks you would make me smile even in gaol. My duty to Sir William and Lady Denham. Tell Mary her counsel served me well in the sharpest strait of all. She will understand. I am in a cell here with two Nonconformists. Griffith, the one I like the least, is at this moment discoursing with the notorious Lodowick Muggleton, who, however, I must not abuse since spite of all my errors he hath not as yet damned me, and will even out of charity bear this letter for me, and deliver it into your keeping. I have waited long in the hope of some such opportunity. The controversy seems drawing to an end, therefore must this letter do so also. For God's sake come to me, and if possible soon.

‘H. W.

‘Written at Newgate,
‘July 16, 1683.’

‘You will go to him at once?’ asked

Mary, feeling for the first time that her womanhood put her at a terrible disadvantage.

‘Ay,’ he replied, ‘at once.’

‘Then take this with you;’ she put her purse into his hand. ‘You will not get in without fees to the turnkeys, and perchance he may be in need of money himself.’

Rupert did not refuse the purse, for to tell the truth his own was as usual inconveniently light. Mary’s money found its way to his pocket among love-letters, betting memoranda, and the tortoise-shell comb with which he kept his periwig in order in society.

It was a great relief to her to see him start off at once, and, having charged him with whatever messages she ventured to send, she stationed herself at the window to watch him out of sight, returning again and again to her post as soon as she deemed it possible for him to return.

The evening seemed interminable. The September twilight deepened into night, and Thomas brought in the lamp, and insisted on drawing the curtains ; she could no longer keep her watch. Lady Merton, tired with her journey, sent down a message that she had gone to bed, and Mary sat idly in the great chair by the hearth, apparently watching old Thomas as he laid the table for supper, but in reality thinking of Rupert's visit to Newgate, and wearying for his return. Thomas, who was of a talkative turn thought he saw an opening for a little conversation.

‘Sad doings in London; mistress, since you went away to Warwickshire. Sad doings we’ve had.’

Mary looked up, returning from her reverie. It chafed her to feel how much more the old serving-man probably knew about the plot than she did, but she longed so much to know all that had happened that she swallowed her pride, and asked him a question.

‘We heard but little in the country,—only vague rumours about the plot, and then that Lord Russell had been executed. Have you heard aught of Colonel Sydney, Thomas?’

‘Ay, indeed, mistress. His man, Joseph, met me some four weeks or more ago, and I made bold to ask him after the colonel. You must know that on the second of August was a great fire in the Inner Temple, over against the great gate at Whitefriars. Three staircases was burnt, and Sir Thomas Robinson, of the Common Pleas, he leaped out of window, and was picked up dead as any stone. Well, mistress, I went next day to see the spot, and there among the crowd I espied Colonel Sydney’s French valet.’

‘And what said he of his master?’

‘Why, he said he was very straitly confined in the Tower, and that they dealt most severely by him, so that his health had given way. They would let him see no friends, they had seized all his goods

and chattels, nor would they permit him to have so much as a change of linen. However, Ducasse did tell me that his master meant to petition the King for at least so much as that.'

Mary was silent for a minute. Her thoughts had flown back to an evening less than a year before, when in that very room Sydney had supped with them, and had discoursed of the better education of women, and how she had laughingly offered him some of the red-deer pie of her own making.

Once more the whole scene rose before her, the empty table was again surrounded by the cheerful party, the Republican colonel leant back in one of the chairs propounding his theories of life; Hugo sat opposite to him, listening with reverential attention; Rupert made comical signs of disagreement; Sir William and Lady Denham listened with mild amusement and well-bred patience to schemes which did not meet with their approval.

Ah ! how safe and happy they had all been then ! And now one of the guests lay in the Tower and the other in Newgate, both of them in the gravest danger, both of them enduring untold hardships. She could almost have smiled, had she not been so wrathfully indignant, at the thought of the proud Republican obliged to petition the King—and such a King—for permission to have a clean shirt.

Thomas, who had left the room during her silence, now returned, bearing a small box in his hand.

‘Ah, mistress,’ he said, looking cautiously round to see that no one else was near, ‘you may have heard little in the country, but we, here in London, have perchance heard too much. I respects my master, and I respects Sir William’s views and opinions, but though folk may say an old serving-man should think with his master, I don’t hold with such sayings. Mark me, mistress, the nation won’t stand such doings as there have been much

longer. Lord Russell he said that those who attacked the liberties of England would have to wade through his blood. Well, God rest his soul! he is dead and gone, but his blood was not shed in vain.'

He opened the box and took out a handkerchief, one corner of which bore a dark red stain. Mary looked at it and shuddered.

'Ay, mistress,' continued the old serving-man, 'I ever deemed myself a loyal subject, but now my eyes are opened, and I say that he who made such an one die, when all the world knew he was innocent, is a tyrant, and false to his country. I stood in Lincoln's Inn Fields, mistress, the day of Lord Russell's execution, and I saw him drive up with Dr. Burnet, brave and composed as could be, and, as I think, singing to himself in an undertone. I saw him butchered, mistress, and I will never forget it. I dipped this handkerchief in his blood, as a token to hand down to my children's children; and

right or wrong, everyone of us is turned against His Majesty from that day.'

'I feel with you,' said Mary, in a low voice. 'But, Thomas, be cautious in what you say, for after all this is my uncle's house, and we are bound to respect his feelings.'

Truth to tell, Mary had long ago ceased to believe in the 'divine right of kings,' but she had never confessed it to anyone, well knowing that girls of twenty were not supposed to think at all upon such matters.

She asked for further details of Lord Russell's trial and death, of which Thomas gave her so harrowing a description that she could not restrain her tears. Scarcely had the old butler withdrawn from the room when steps sounded in the street without, and Rupert opened the front door. Mary hurried forward to meet him, an eager question on her lips.

'Tis all of no use,' said her cousin, wrathfully; 'they will not let me see him.'

'You have been to Newgate?' said Mary.

‘Ay, and saw the governor. He admitted that Hugo was there, that he was ill, that he was in the darkest hole in Newgate, and that he had lain there since July, being far more obstinate than they had reckoned for. I tried to bribe him to let me see him, but ’twas of no avail.

“Not if you offered me all the gold in the Indies,” he said. “The court has an eye to this prisoner; he is no common case, to be dealt with as I list.”

“The court will defeat its own ends by letting him pine to death in a dungeon,” said I.

“Men don’t pine to death so easily as you think for,” said the governor, laughing. “And you may think yourself lucky for being spared a visit to a pestilent den, where likely enough the prisoner would refuse to speak to you, for he hath taken to silence of late. The more men would have him to talk, the more he persists in holding his tongue.”

‘I asked what his illness was, whereupon

the governor rang a bell and in came a gaoler, worse looking than himself, who, in presence of his master, gave naught but surly answers and rough jests.'

'Could you not have seen him alone?' said Mary.

'Ay. Afterwards, having taken leave of the governor, I managed, by the aid of one of your golden guineas, to secure this fellow Scroop. He says the damp of the dungeon and the bad food have made him ill; he couldn't say how, not being a leech himself. I gave him a message for Hugo, but he would not promise to bear it him. Rough and coarse as he was, though, he is better than the governor, though he looks worse, and he might be bribed.'

The cousins talked together far into the night, planning how to reach Hugo.

The next morning all London was ringing with the sound of church-bells, for it was the 9th of September, the day appointed for the national thanksgiving for the King's escape from the Rye-House plot.

Some commotion was caused in one of the churches, for a note was handed in to the unsuspecting reader and delivered by him before he had fairly gathered the drift of the verse.* The astonished congregation, who had come to return thanks for His Majesty's deliverance, listened in amazement to the following lines :

‘ You hypocrites, forbear your pranks,
To murder men and then give thanks :
Forbear your tricks, pursue no further,
For God accepts no thanks for murder.’

In the meantime old Thomas quietly made his way home again, and Mary Denham was not sorry to avail herself of the large green fan which ladies were in the habit of taking with them to church to screen their devotions.

One other person in the church also changed colour from very different reasons. Randolph's face grew a shade paler, his bitter mouth twitched nervously once or twice. Murder was an ugly word, and

* This actually happened. See Luttrell's Journal.

there was such a thing as aiding and abetting murder. Then again there was Hugo. They had brought him word that he was ill, and he had rejoiced, thinking that there was the greater chance of gaining his point and dragging from his lips the desired information. But if Hugo were to die?

He shuddered at that thought. And the thought haunted him persistently all through the service. He had vowed that he would not see his brother before his trial, but while the old clergyman delivered his lengthy discourse Randolph was struggling with an almost unconquerable longing that had suddenly seized him. A strong desire to see Hugo once more took possession of him. How was he to justify such a change of purpose to himself? How was he to permit such a weakness? In truth the better part of his nature was striving to make itself felt, and to escape from the thralldom of the lower. To do Randolph justice, he had been sufficiently miserable during these summer months,

and this day his misery reached its climax. Something, he knew not what, had touched into life the faint love which yet lingered in his heart for Hugo. If he could but justify this desire to see him with his plans and schemes! And, after all, it would defeat these said schemes were Hugo to die in gaol, and was he prudent to trust entirely to the word of an ignorant gaoler? Hugo was too valuable to be left in such a way. It would be in every way prudent to visit him. Having thus reconciled himself and made his excuses to his lower nature, he lost no time in making his way to Newgate, where no difficulty was made about admitting him. He asked a question or two of Scroop as the gaoler led him along the dreary passages.

‘Was the prisoner better? What had his illness been?’ and so forth.

‘You’ll judge for yourself, sir,’ said Scroop, grimly. ‘I never set up for being a leech.’

‘But is he yet ill?’ asked the elder

brother,' with more anxiety in his voice than he cared to betray.

'Oh, ay, he's ill yet awhile, if sobeit he's alive,' said Scroop, carelessly. 'Have a care how you walk, sir, these steps is slippery with the damp.'

'What ! is it down here !' exclaimed Randolph, shuddering. 'Tis enough to kill him, in good sooth. Why did you put him in such a vile hole ?'

'I did but obey the governor's orders, sir, and belike you know from whom he received them.' Scroop looked sharply back at his companion as he gave utterance to these words. He was pleased to see Randolph wince. 'Belike you'll not care to remain long, sir ; I will but lock you in with the prisoner for a half hour. This way, sir, and mind your head.'

So saying, he fitted one of his keys into a low door, unlocked it, drew back the bolts, and bade the visitor walk in.

CHAPTER XIII.

RANDOLPH'S REMORSE.

Yea, bless'd is he in life and death
 That fears not death, nor loves this life ;
 That sets his will, his wit beneath,
 And hath continual peace in strife.
 That doth in spite of all debate
 Possess his soul in patience ;
 And pray, in love, for all that hate ;
 And hate but what doth give offence.

JOHN DAVIES (1612).

RANDOLPH made a step or two forward, cautiously groping his way, for at first he could scarcely discern anything in the dim light. He would fain have kept the gaoler with him, for it gave him an unpleasant feeling to be locked into this dismal dungeon, where all was silent as the

grave. Supposing Hugo were actually dead? What if his worst fears were realised.

It was strange that he made no sign, for his eyes must have grown accustomed to the twilight. The floor was rough and uneven, in many places covered with water nearly an inch deep. Randolph splashed straight into it, and swore half-a-dozen oaths as the chill and muddy stream found its way into his shoes. But soon things grew clear to him, and once more he could see distinctly all that there was to see in the bare prison cell. Hugo, wrapped in a dark green cloak, lay on the stony bed in the corner; his white face and hands, gleaming out of the dimness, looked so deathly that Randolph with an exclamation of dismay hurried across the muddy floor, and bent down close to him. At that moment his eyes opened, gazed in astonishment for an instant at the face bent over him, then lit up with a gleam of momentary rapture.

‘Is it you?’ he cried. ‘Ah, I have had such hateful dreams.’

‘I came here to see how you fared,’ said Randolph, more gently than he was in the habit of speaking.

‘Here?’ repeated Hugo, his face clouding over. ‘Where is it? Where are we? He half-raised himself with a bewildered, troubled look and glanced around. It was after all the dream that had been fair and the reality that was hateful. There was the grim, iron-studded door, and the little grating, and the bare walls, and the wet floor gleaming in the sickly light. He sank back again, and covered his face with his hands. There was silence in the cell. Randolph was relieved when he looked up once more.

‘I must have slept right sound,’ he said, in a voice which betrayed repressed suffering. ‘I did not hear you come in.’

‘You have little else to do in Newgate, I should think.’

‘No; and here it is not often possible to

sleep at night because of the rats; they are quieter by day.'

He got up as he spoke, and crossed the cell languidly, returning with a rough wooden seat which he offered to his brother.

Then he sat down on the bed with his back against the wall, and his head resting on his hand.

'Your head is aching?' asked Randolph.

'Yes,' he said, quietly, 'it always aches now.'

'They should have told me how ill you were.'

'Scroop said he did tell you. Scroop is very good to me.'

'What does he do for you?'

Randolph glanced round as though to discover traces of the gaoler's attention.

'He brings the bread and water himself instead of sending one of the prisoners; and he is never uncivil now. And on the bad days he will bring me a double share of water.'

‘There is no other prisoner with you, then?’

‘No, save for the first day and night, when poor Baillie was here. Baillie of Jerviswood, a Scotsman, near of kin to Dr. Burnet.’

‘I have heard of him,’ said Randolph. ‘He too was implicated in the plot. What has come to him? Is he executed?’

‘No,’ said Hugo. ‘Worse than that. They bore him back to Scotland because here they may not legally torture him for evidence. There he may have both rack and boot.’

‘And since he went you have been alone?’

‘Yes, save when Scroop comes in, or Mr. Ambrose Philips.’

‘Who is he?’

‘One who hath an order from one of the secretaries to come here as oft as he will and try to drag evidence from me.’

‘Ah, lad,’ said Randolph, with a sigh, ‘when are you going to yield to him?’

What heart have I for joining in a National Thanksgiving while you languish here !'

Hugo turned his languid eyes upon him for a minute, but he seemed too weak and depressed to care very much for anything.

'Is there a thanksgiving?' he asked. 'I heard St. Sepulchre's bells ring. They tolled for Lord Russell the day I came in here, and now they ring for the King's triumph. What day is it? I have lost count of time.'

'Tis the 9th of September.'

'Then I have but been in this cell nigh upon two months. Yet it seems like two years.' Then, half dreamily, 'How merry the bells sound. I thought it must be Gunpowder-plot Day. Only September! Only September! My God! keep me from thinking of the whole!'

'The whole of what?' asked Randolph, startled by the sudden tone of agony.

Hugo seemed to return to the world again.

‘Of life,’ he said. ‘It is thinking of the whole that drives men wild.’

Randolph knew not what to say. The interview had not been at all what he had expected. Hugo did not seem over-powered with delight at seeing him, nor much struck by his condescension in coming; he was so ill and weak, too, that the elder brother’s manhood kept him from saying what was harsh and bitter, and tender words did not come naturally to his lips. So once more he fell back into an uncomfortable silence.

All at once voices were heard outside, and the key grated in the lock. An extraordinary change came over Hugo. His pale face flushed as though he had made some sudden effort; he sprang up, crossed the cell hurriedly, and took up a position with his back to the light, leaning against the wall below the grating. Meanwhile Scroop had opened the door, and there entered a bland-looking man, who glanced swiftly at Randolph.

‘Ah, the gaoler told me I should find you here. I have merely come to have my little conversation with your brother. I will not interrupt you long.’

Randolph perceived that this must be Mr. Philips. The little man turned to Hugo, who merely bowed to him, and then once more leant back against the wall with folded arms.

‘Well, Mr. Wharnccliffe, I hope I see you better. What do you think of our National Thanksgiving, eh? What, still playing the mute? I hoped you had tired of that game. But in truth I have some news for you this morning. I have been to the Tower, and have seen your friend Sydney.’

Hugo’s face relaxed a little, and a very eager look dawned in his eyes.

‘How is he?’ he asked, anxiously.

‘Nay,’ said Philips, ‘why should I tell you what you would fain know, when you will not tell me aught that I desire? Promise to give evidence against the colo-

nel, and I'll not only tell you about him, but I'll bear you to him this very day.'

Hugo vouchsafed no answer to this. Philips continued, more warmly,

'You *know* that your fate is in your own hands. 'Tis in your own power to make yourself what you will, for you know this rogue Sydney is a traitor, and you may make yourself what you will, if you will discover what you know of his designs against the government.'

'You are mistaken,' said Hugo, sternly. 'I could say naught that could touch a hair of Colonel Sydney's head. I have told you so a hundred times.'

'If I might advise the King,' said Philips, wrathfully, 'I would bid him have all you damned Whig rogues hanged. The colonel sent a message to you, moreover,' he continued, tantalizingly; 'but it is impossible for me to deliver it while you still keep up this stubborn resistance.'

And thus in much the same strain the interview went on, Philips alternately

coaxing and threatening, Hugo loftily silent, his face stern, his lips firmly set, his eyes, which just before had been so languid, full of strength and resistance.*

At length the questioner's patience was exhausted, and he took his leave.

'You may think to baffle me, Mr. Wharncliffe,' he said, angrily, 'and for a time you may succeed, but in the end you will be forced to succumb. Mark my words, there are worse things in our power than you wot of. I have known folk not allowed to sleep by day or by night for weeks that evidence might be gained. I shall see you again on the morrow.'

Hugo bowed, but made no reply, and Philips, rapping loudly on the door, was released by Scroop, who had remained

* Ambrose Philips was really employed to extort evidence against Sydney from one Aaron Smith, who was kept for some time a prisoner. See Ewald's 'Life of Sydney.' Meadley says that prisons were ransacked, and menaces and persuasions alternately employed among the prisoners, in order to get a second witness to prove Sydney's treason, but none could be found.

outside. When the door had been closed and locked, Hugo, with an air of great exhaustion, recrossed the cell, and once more lay down on the bed.

‘That is over,’ he muttered to himself, in a tone of relief.

‘You dread Mr. Philips, then?’ said Randolph.

Hugo started.

‘I had forgot you were there,’ he said. ‘No, I do not dread the man, but I dread myself. Oh! must you go?’ as Randolph rose and began to readjust his cloak. ‘Will you not stay yet a little while? There is so much I would ask you,—and who knows if we shall meet again?’

There was such entreaty in his voice that Randolph sat down once more.

‘We shall meet again at your trial,’ he said, coldly. ‘Have you not remembered that I shall have to bear witness against you?’

‘Yes,’ said Hugo. ‘But perchance that may never come off. There is a deliverer

on whom Ambrose Philips does not reckon. Every second day the fever returns to me, and with that a chance of death. But I waste the time. Tell me of Jeremiah—of the Denhams.'

Randolph had not the heart to refuse his request.

'You don't know what it is to have you to talk to,' he said, gratefully; 'the days are like eternity.'

'They do not permit books?'

'No; I have naught to pass the time save an old bit of charcoal, with which I can draw, and a rat which I have tamed. Were it not for those, I should have gone mad.'

'By your own confession, you see, you are altogether miserable. Why, then, be such a fool as to stay?'

'No,' said Hugo, quietly, 'I am not wholly miserable. Can you not understand that 'tis sweet to feel you hold the safety of two men in your keeping? Did I betray them, then indeed I should be,

and deserve to be, right miserable. What ! one o'clock by St. Sepulchre's ?'

'Ay ; is that your dinner-hour ?' asked Randolph.

Hugo smiled faintly.

'One does not dine in Newgate,' he said. 'But this is the hour when my fever returns. Perchance it were, after all, best that you should go.'

Randolph half hesitated. Truth to tell, he wanted his own dinner, and yet a vague uneasiness prompted him to stay with his brother. He looked down at him intently, and that look made him decide to stay. For, true to Hugo's prediction, the paroxysm of ague had already begun. He had turned ghastly pale, his lips were blue, his face haggard and drawn. Randolph thought him dying.

'There is naught to fear,' he said, speaking as well as he could with chattering teeth. 'It is ever like this.'

But Randolph did fear. For soon Hugo was shivering from head to foot,

and a strange blue shade had overspread his face.

‘Do they not even allow straw in this wretched hole?’ said Randolph, wrathfully.

‘No,’ he replied; ‘for fear of fire.’

To speak of fear of fire in that miserable, damp dungeon seemed a mockery. With an oath, Randolph tore off both his cloak and doublet and wrapped them round the shivering form.

‘Is that better?’ he asked.

But there was no reply. Hugo seemed to be drifting away into unconsciousness. Was it the unconsciousness of death?

‘He shall not die!’ said Randolph to himself. ‘He shall not!’ And, with a pang, Hugo’s own words returned to him—‘’Tis sweet to feel you hold the safety of others in your keeping.’

Sweet! It was hideous beyond description—it was intolerable! But his brother should not die; death should not deliver him. His life was too precious to be lost. Not that Randolph would permit himself

weakly to be turned from his purpose by the sight of a little pain. Hugo should remain in Newgate till he had been forced into giving evidence, but he should not stay another day even in that pestilent dungeon. He rapped loudly on the door to attract Scroop's attention; but the gaoler was out of hearing, and, to tell the truth, had forgotten him. He knocked, he swore, he stormed, all to no purpose.

‘Must you go?’ said Hugo, reviving a little.

‘No, but I want to send that varlet to fetch blankets for you. A plague on his foolish pate. Why doth he not hear?’

‘Never mind; a dozen blankets would not warm me. Moreover, I am well used to it.’

Randolph stood watching him in miserable helplessness. At length, prompted by common-sense, he sat down on the stony pillow and lifted Hugo so that his head and shoulders rested against him instead of upon the stones.

‘Ah! that is better,’ he said, and spite of the pain and misery, a look of relief—almost of happiness—stole over his worn face.

They did not speak much, but for hours Randolph held him in his strong arms and did what he could for him, Hugo responding with the sort of dog-like gratitude with which he had always accepted kindness from his guardian. At length, when the shivering fits had given place to raging fever and thirst, when the third and final stage of the attack was over and had left the patient worn out and drowsy, Randolph once more resumed his doublet and hat, and this time succeeded in attracting Scroop’s notice.

‘Had as much as you like of dungeon life, sir?’ asked the gaoler.

‘Ay, and the prisoner hath had too much,’ said Randolph. Then bending down over his brother, ‘It shall be your last night in this hole, trust me.’

Hastily embracing him he turned away,

and was conducted by Scroop to the upper regions.

‘Ah, my Ratto,’ said Hugo, as his little brown friend appeared the moment the cell was quiet once more, ‘you and your family may dance all night as you will, I’ll not grumble ; for to-morrow, Ratto, I shall breathe freely once more, to-morrow I shall have better company than you.’

But when the next evening he thought things over, he came to the conclusion that he had wronged Ratto.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLEVELAND HOUSE.

Oh, most delicate fiend !

Who is't can read a woman ?

Cymbeline.

AFTER the first moment of intense relief on breathing the fresh air in Newgate Street, Randolph fell into a train of very unpleasant thought. The struggle first awakened in his mind by that curious rhyme in the church returned now with tenfold force. He could not get his will, at any rate at present ; but neither could he make up his mind to resign his will and accept defeat at the hands of his younger brother. Without accepting de-

feat, he could not save Hugo from the hard fate that awaited him. In this strait what was he to do? Not for long years had so sharp a struggle raged within him, not for long years had the good so nearly triumphed.

He had walked gloomily along Fleet Street, chafed and annoyed by the loyal crowd who were preparing the evening illuminations. Somehow this thanksgiving grated on him, seemed to his guilty conscience but a hideous mockery. Again and again he heard Hugo's voice dreamily repeating, 'How merry the bells sound,' and he shuddered as he remembered the dreary prison cell.

By this time he had reached the entrance to the Temple, and for a moment he stood irresolute, vaguely listening to the bells of St. Clement's, vaguely watching the men and boys as they heaped faggots upon a bonfire hard by. Should he go home to encounter Jeremiah's stern face and unspoken reproaches, or should he divert his

thoughts from the unpleasant subject altogether and go to Cleveland House? He looked past the bonfire in the direction of the Strand, he looked to the left towards the dark and quiet Temple. Which was it to be? His whole future life hung upon the choice, little as he was aware of the fact. An insignificant turning-point, a decision which seemed scarce worth pausing over, but, as is so often the case, one upon which hung great issues.

The chambers in King's-Bench-Walk rose vividly before him—the empty chair, the untouched books, the silence, the sad-faced serving-man. Why, it would all reproach him, all re-echo the inward voice of his self-reproach. He could not bear it. He must seek diversion, dancing, drink, flattery, vice, anything, he cared not what, so that it would take him out of his true self. He turned into the 'Grecian,' made a hasty meal, then threading his way through the crowded streets, sought refuge from his tormenting thoughts in the costly

and magnificent house—a palace in all but the name—which had been built for the Duchess of Cleveland. This evening it was quieter than usual, for there were festivities at Whitehall, and the duchess would have been there herself had she not been detained by a slight indisposition. Randolph was ushered through stately corridors and gorgeous but tenantless rooms to a little boudoir which he knew right well. It was a charming little room ; the most beautiful tapestry hung upon the walls, the softest skin rugs covered the floor, a cheerful wood fire threw its mellow light upon one of Grinling Gibbon's most delicately carved chimney-pieces, and wax candles disposed here and there beneath rose-coloured shades diffused a soft glow on all around. At one end of the room an open doorway, half veiled by silken draperies of gold and crimson, betrayed a vision of white-robed attendants with lutes, harps, and guitars, and as Randolph entered a girl's voice was filling the room with

the exquisite air and the abominable words of one of the songs of the day. Beside the wood fire in the boudoir sat the Duchess of Cleveland, her shapely head with its rich brown curls resting in languid comfort among crimson velvet cushions, her tiny feet stretched out to the blaze upon a French tabouret, her long, loose dress of creamy Indian silk falling in rich folds on the tiger-skin rug, and her swan-like neck partly veiled by a soft, white fur tippet which she had drawn around her.

‘Ah, is it you, Randolph?’ she said, smiling and motioning him to a seat beside her. ‘You have come to cheer me in my desolation. I took cold upon the river last night, and so dare not share in the Whitehall festival.’

So carefully and delicately did her attendants dispose the rouge and powder, that it was almost impossible to believe the duchess to be a middle-aged woman. She had all the charms of youth and all the *savoir-faire* and acute observation of a

woman of great experience. Her pencilled eyebrows, her large, lustrous dark eyes, her finely chiselled nose with its arched nostrils, and her full, red lips, bore an expression of calm, haughty consciousness of power. Looking far younger than Randolph, she was in truth some years his senior, and, while seeming only to charm and amuse him, she ruled over him despotically. In his inmost heart he was aware that he was her slave, but this was a slavery which he did not deem bondage. It was the fashion. What then! he must follow with the multitude, and there was no shame connected with such conquest. But to be conquered by principles, to own the sovereignty of conscience, to sacrifice present gain to some shadowy notion of right, this was a 'bondage' which he could not endure, which, in fact, he had not the courage to face. He had come to Cleveland House to be soothed out of the rugged vision of hateful duty, of humiliating reparation which had dawned upon him.

He had come because his love of Hugo had made him miserable, and because his love of self made him hate the misery, and because, in good truth, vice was so easy and natural, and the first steps in virtue so perplexing and hard.

‘I cannot so much as smell a flower,’ said the duchess, laughing and taking from her bosom a cluster of red roses. ‘There, you happy mortal, exempt from colds and coughs! bear them for me. Oh, crimini! how he crushes my poor gift in his manly grasp! Thou art out of temper to-night, *mon ami*.’

‘And therefore I came to you,’ he said, looking at her bright, laughing eyes.

‘That is ever the fate of women,’ said the duchess, pouting and re-arranging her dress. She had taper fingers, but her wrists were large and ugly. ‘When the men are worth talking to they stay away. When they are in the dumps they come and expect to be amused, for all the world like peevish, nursery imps. I dare swear

it is that brother of yours who troubles your peace. Ah ! I thought as much.'

'I have seen him this day. He is ill, well-nigh dying.'

'That must not be allowed,' said the duchess, decidedly. 'What, have they been starving him?'

'They have done their worst to him, and he will reveal naught. Misery seems to have no power to shake him from his purpose.'

'He was ever obstinate as a mule, our little Court saint,' said the duchess. 'But since misery will not move him, try yet another plan. Let him have the best private cell which Newgate will afford, and I will send a sweet little temptress to nurse him into health and to play the part of a Delilah.'

Randolph did not speak, there was a curious look of doubt and hesitation in his face.

'What ! art turning Puritan ?' said the duchess, with a mocking laugh.

‘A very idle question, fair lady,’ he replied, with a slightly sarcastic smile, ‘while I sit here in this palace of delight. However, you know well that in some sense Hugo may be accounted one.’

‘That was all very well when he was a pretty pale-faced boy. But now he is a man and ought to pay his *devoirs* to beauty and love. He must be brought down from his lofty heights, very kindly and tenderly as you will, but he must be brought down, else will you never gain from him what you would. Why should you object? ’Twill be a kindness to send him what will best cheer his solitude. And as to my little Blanchette she will be the queen of his heart ere another day is over. No man can resist Blanchette. I will call her.’

The duchess touched a little silver bell which stood beside her, and immediately one of the white-robed attendants appeared at the doorway, with one hand holding back the silken curtain which

hung in soft sheeny folds on each side of her. She was a beautiful creature, tall, graceful, with snowy neck and arms, masses of loose flaxen hair, and eyes which were constantly veiling themselves beneath dark lashes as though modestly conscious of their own power.

‘What was the name of your song, Blanchette?’ asked the duchess.

‘It was a love song, by my Lord Rochester,’ said the girl, in a high, clear voice, in which there were pleasant modulations.

‘It suits you well, go sing another like it. After that you may close the door.’

The girl curtseyed and withdrew, and ere long another passionate song thrilled through both ante-room and boudoir. Then the door was softly closed, and there was silence.

‘Well, shall we try her?’ said the duchess.

‘Perchance it might be as well,’ said Randolph.

‘Still doubtful,’ said the duchess, laugh-

ing. 'Why, *mon ami*, St. Antony himself couldn't have resisted her. I see a triumphant end to all your trouble.'

Randolph did not speak. His eye had fallen upon a mirror which hung upon the opposite wall. In it he could see the reflection of the luxurious room, of the magical lights, of the beautiful duchess, with her pearl earrings and necklace, of himself lying on the tiger-skin rug at her feet.

Another picture rose before him. A dank prison wall, a gleam of chill light from a narrow grating, a man standing beneath it with folded arms, set lips, stern brow, bearing threats and taunts in silence, rejecting bribes with scorn.

And the duchess spoke lightly and cheerfully of a 'triumphant end.'

Well, it would be worth while to triumph over that other!—that other whose picture contrasted so unpleasantly with the reflection in the mirror. He would like to triumph over him, he would like to falsify that picture, he would like to

drag him down, he hated him for his resistance. He should not die, he should not triumph, he should be dragged down, and be a little lower than himself.

‘You have cheered me,’ he said, turning to the duchess with a smile in his dark eyes, in which there lurked already the anticipation of victory. ‘An you will indeed spare her, Blanchette shall try her skill.’

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIAL.

This man is great with little state,
Lord of the world epitomised :
Who with staid front out-faceth fate :
And, being empty, is sufficed—
Or is sufficed with little, since (at least),
He makes his conscience a perpetual feast.
JOHN DAVIES (1612).

SCROOP had never been deficient in that which should be a marked characteristic in a gaoler,—he had never lacked a habit of observation. At the same time he had never observed any prisoner with such acuteness as he observed Hugo Wharncliffe. He had watched men in the mass, he had watched them as cases, but he had never before watched them with deep in-

terest as individuals. On the night of Hugo's arrival in June, Scroop had for the first time in his life wondered. Through those dreary August days, watching his prisoner in the dungeon as he fought against fever, depression, and misery, Scroop wondered still, and grew pitiful. Through the six weeks of fierce, unmitigated temptation that followed the elder brother's visit, Scroop wondered more and more, and grew reverential. At length there came a day when Blanchette failed to appear at Newgate, and thereupon the gaoler was summoned into the governor's private room.

'Mr. Wharncliffe hath recovered from his illness?'

'Ay, sir. He seems well enough.'

'Good. Then remove him this day to the Common Debtor's Ward. 'Tis well he should try a change of air.'

Scroop dutifully grinned in recognition of his superior's jest, and at once proceeded to obey his orders.

The room to which Hugo had been removed was dry, well-aired, and by no means uncomfortable; he probably owed his life to the change. As Scroop opened the door, the prisoner looked up apprehensively; when he perceived that the gaoler was alone, he could not repress a look of relief.

The six weeks' temptation had left very visible marks upon his face. It was no longer possible to forget that he was a man—the words 'boy' and 'lad' which had hitherto most naturally come to the lips in speaking of him, were no longer appropriate. The dreamy look in his eyes had given place to a quiet vigilance. The sweet-tempered mouth had become sterner and straighter—and youth had passed for ever.

'I am to be removed, Scroop? That is well,' he said, with a sigh of relief.

'Your honour does not ask whither,' said the gaoler.

'I care not,' said Hugo. 'So it be from

here, and from——' He broke off and relapsed into silence.

Scroop felt sorry for his charge. And yet, since he had held his own through such numberless temptations, why should he not hold his own still, even in the degraded atmosphere of the common gaol?

Truth to tell, the change was at first welcome to Hugo. It was a relief to see fresh faces, even though they were reckless and often wicked faces; it was a relief to hear once more the babel of many voices, and it needed all his new strength to resist the craving which came over him to join the majority in drowning wretchedness in drink, and whiling away the weary days by reckless play. He had been in this new ward about a fortnight, when one day he was ordered into the governor's presence.

'You had best be preparing your defence, Mr. Wharncliffe,' said the governor. 'For a Habeas Corpus hath been brought unto me, and I am ordered to bring you

before the Court of King's-Bench on the morrow.'

'To-morrow!' exclaimed Hugo, hardly knowing whether he were relieved at the news or not. 'Am I not to be allowed counsel?'

'No, sir,' replied the governor.

'I suppose I can have a copy of the indictment?' said Hugo, frowning slightly, for he was greatly perplexed to know what possible defence he could make.

'Oh! yes, you can have that,' said the governor, coolly. 'And much may it help you.'

Hugo read it in silence. Then he looked up boldly; not that he felt any confidence whatever, but that he would not let the governor see his hopelessness.

'I desire to subpœna two witnesses,' he said. 'Sir William Denham of Norfolk Street, also Mr. Rupert Denham.'

'It shall be done,' said the governor. 'They have both of them been here full oft desiring to see you. 'Twill at any rate

look well to have such a Tory name as Denham witnessing in your behalf.'

Hugo made no answer. He knew that the only witnesses who could avail him aught were at Mondisfield Hall, knew that there could be but one end to the trial.

He slept little that night, looking forward with a curious mixture of pain and pleasure to the coming day. It would be bitter beyond all thought to see Randolph arraigned against him, yet it would be inexpressibly delightful to breathe fresh air once more, to see the world again, to see and perhaps speak with his old friends.

Early in the morning he was taken in a hackney-coach to Westminster; the change of scene was less enjoyable than he had expected, he felt dazed, confused, and terribly unequal to the work which lay before him. Moreover, the sun was not shining, as he had hoped. It was a gloomy November morning, and he could only catch a glimpse of the Abbey looming drearily out of the river fog.

He tried to fancy himself once more a Westminster boy, tried to think this was all some hideous dream ;—and indeed it scarcely felt real to him when the coach drew up at the entrance to Westminster Hall, and he was marshalled through the staring crowd, to find himself, not in his wonted place taking notes of the cases among a group of careless Templars, but as a prisoner at the bar. He glanced hastily around, noting many familiar faces, the sight of which disturbed him so much that he was glad to sit down and busy himself with some papers which he had brought, with a few notes as to his defence. He felt that Randolph was present, but could not bear to look at him ; he knew that the Lord-Chief-Justice was darkly regarding him, but, having once bowed to him, he would not cast one glance in his direction, for he feared Jeffreys, and was afraid of showing his fear, and ashamed of the weakness which yet he had never been able to overcome. There was not

much time for thought; all was proceeded with very rapidly, the names of the jury hurried through, the indictment read, and the case opened by the counsel for the prosecution. Hugo tried hard to listen, tried hard to think, but the speech reached him in very disjointed fashion. He was vaguely conscious that Mr. Ingram, in a clear, ringing, attractive voice, was saying that he would prove the prisoner to be a member of the Green Ribbon Club, a personal friend of Algernon Sydney, one who protected conventiclers, a betrayer of trust, a hater of monarchy, and a concealer of treason of the deepest dye.

The speech was an effective one. At the close the witnesses for the Crown were called, and the first name which rang through the court was that of Randolph Wharncliffe. The prisoner seemed to come to himself as the familiar name fell upon his ear. He drew himself together, sat more erect, looked up calmly for the first time, unmindful of the myriad eyes fixed

upon him,—mindful only of the face which he had not seen for so many weeks. He watched his brother keenly as the oath was administered to him. Did he think of that scene in the gallery at Mondisfield, when another oath had been administered on the nun's cross? If so, the thought left no trace on his stern brow; he looked hard, austere, as though he hated the work before him, but meant to go through it unscrupulously. Then, skilfully aided by questions from Mr. Ingram, Randolph unfolded the whole story of Hugo's two visits to Mondisfield, omitting only, or adroitly veiling, all that could make his own share in the work appear dishonourable—omitting, of course, the scene with the pistol.

Indignation at this incomplete version began to stir in Hugo's heart, and a pang of wrathful pleasure possessed him when he remembered that it was in his power to cross-examine the witness. He would punish him—would drag from his lips the disgraceful confession of that midnight

scene—would show forth before all men the villainy that had led him astray. Revenge at least was in his power, and revenge he would have. His eyes flashed so strangely that the spectators wondered what had come to the prisoner, who at first had been so passive and downcast.

And yet?—and yet? Was it for him to think of vengeance? Was he—the greatly forgiven—to harbour wrathful feelings? Was he to treat his brother as though there were no tie between them—no deathless bond of kinship? Well, Randolph had broken the bond,—had treated him shamefully. Why should he not follow his example? Why should he not have his turn now?

‘If you have any questions to put to the witness,’ bawled Jeffreys, ‘put them at once.’

Hugo stood up. Burning words were on his lips,—words which would have shamed Randolph before the whole court,—questions to which he could but have

given one reply. Nothing could have altered the inevitable result of the trial, but this would have brought to light Randolph's villainy, and proved the strongest excuse for himself; but at that moment another trial scene flashed before his mind—the vision of another prisoner—and with that a loathing of his selfish anger and petty revenge, and withal a recollection of what love and brotherhood meant.

‘Of my brother I ask no question,’ he said, quietly; and resumed his seat amid murmurs of surprise.

Only Randolph fully understood all that was involved in the prisoner's silence. A sudden flush overspread his dark face; he left the witness-box hastily, and passed through the crowd with a face so troubled and downcast that many of the observant people remarked that it must be hard on an elder brother to bear such family disgrace: they felt sorry for Mr. Wharncliffe.

John Pettit, landlord of the ‘White Horse,’ Mondisfield, next deposed to the

prisoner's presence at his inn on the 5th of October of the previous year, and corroborated Randolph's assertion that Hugo had accompanied his brother in the evening. Hugo put two or three questions to him, but chiefly for the pleasure of speaking to one who knew Joyce.

Sir Peregrine Blake and other witnesses followed, and there was much discussion upon the papers found in Colonel Wharncliffe's room. Then Hugo was told to enter upon his defence. Sir William and Rupert listened now anxiously, and were in truth astonished at the prisoner's intrepid bearing. It was the first time he had ever spoken in public, and to speak amid the perpetual interruptions of Jeffreys was no easy matter. However, he went steadily on, knowing that the defence was useless, yet with simple directness putting forward the sole plea which was left to him. He was charged with misprision of treason, but it had yet to be proved that treasonable matter was con-

tained in the particular book of manuscripts which he had concealed, it had yet to be proved that treasonable words had been spoken at the meeting at Mondisfield. They had but the witness of one man to these facts; he submitted that the treason was only inferred, and not proven.

Then he called upon Sir William Denham to bear witness to his character, and Sir William, having described him as the last man on earth to meddle with plots or politics, and one of the King's most loyal subjects, made way for his son, who confirmed his testimony. It was a lame defence, and a poor show of witnesses, yet better than nothing.

'What! no more witnesses?' shouted Jeffreys, in mocking tones.

'No, my lord,' said Hugo, composedly.

'Then address yourself to the jury, and don't waste time,' said the Lord-Chief-Justice. Nothing irritated him so much as quiet composure. 'I can tell you we've weightier matters in hand this day than

listening to the vain prattle of such lads as you. Speak on, and keep to the point.'

'Gentlemen,' said Hugo, his mellow voice contrasting oddly with Jeffreys' hoarse roar, 'perchance you will not deem five minutes over long for one who is pleading against lifelong imprisonment. I have been denied the aid of counsel, denied any legal aid whatever, and am therefore at great disadvantage. However, I trust you will hold with the poet—

" For lawyers and their pleading,
They esteem it not a straw ;
They think that honest meaning
Is of itself a law."

It hath been shown to you that I have ever been His Majesty's loyal subject ; I heard no word of the plot till the whole was made public, nor have you any right to construe a refusal to give evidence against a kinsman into a mute acknowledgment that the said kinsman is guilty of treason. You may infer what you

please—I cannot help that—but I maintain, gentlemen—and I think you will agree with me—that the treason is not proven, and that you cannot legally find me guilty of misprision, seeing that the whole hangeth upon the word of but one witness. My life is in your hands. I ask you, apart from fear or favour, to give me the verdict of honest citizens, and to say that this case is not proven.’

Had the jury gone away with those unmistakably honest tones ringing in their ears, there might have been some faint hope for Hugo, but there followed Mr. Ingram’s powerful speech on behalf of the Crown, and then Jeffreys’ summing-up and charge to the jury. Accustomed as he was to the brutality of the Lord-Chief-Justice, Hugo was yet amazed at the audacious wickedness of the man, his utter disregard of all reason and right. The jury retired, but speedily returned; after such a charge, they could but give one answer. Jeffreys, well pleased, stood

up to deliver sentence, and there was a gleam of savage amusement in his eye, for he knew that he had a surprise in store for the prisoner—this obstinate fellow, out of whom, nevertheless, he still hoped to drag the desired evidence.

‘Hugo Wharncliffe,’—the voice sought now to be only judicial and severe—‘you are found guilty of the crime of misprision of treason; I therefore sentence you to be imprisoned during the remainder of your natural life, or during His Majesty’s pleasure; and, in consideration of your extreme youth, I pronounce that the punishment of forfeiture of goods and chattels, or of profits arising upon lands belonging unto you, shall be commuted, and in lieu thereof you shall be whipped by the common hangman from Newgate to Tyburn.’

A murmur of surprise and astonishment ran through the court, the barristers clustered together in little groups and whispered questions as to the legality of Jeffreys’ sentence. Was there any pre-

cedent for such a proceeding? Could such punishment be legally substituted? Sir William Denham shed tears, Rupert swore under his breath, Randolph flushed slightly, but never took his eyes off his brother's face. Beyond a doubt Hugo was startled; as the terrible doom was spoken, he looked up hastily, looked up incredulously. Surely his ears must have deceived him? Surely that punishment could never be his?

'My lord,' he said, the colour surging up in his pale face, 'I have not been guilty of a misdemeanour, and methinks your sentence is illegal.'

They were bold words to speak to such an one as the Lord-Chief-Justice. Everyone looked in amaze at the prisoner, who had dared to make such a remonstrance.

Jeffreys grew purple with wrath.

'What, sirrah!' he exclaimed, in thundering tones, 'are you such an adept in legal matters that you can instruct me? Say another word, and you shall stand

in the pillory into the bargain! Gaoler! remove the prisoner at once.'

Hugo bowed to his judge, and turned unresistingly towards the gaoler, who led him from the court. He felt stunned, stupefied; afterwards he recollected sorrowfully that he had not even looked at the Denhams or at Randolph, had not made the most of that brief glimpse of his old haunts. Unresistingly, silently, he was led down Westminster Hall, past the familiar book-stalls, through the staring crowd—the crowd which certainly was far greater than usual. So much greater that his attention was at length aroused; he came to himself, looked round, and wondered. His own case would certainly have failed to attract any special notice. For what, then, were these spectators waiting? and why did they all stand with their faces turned to the great door which he was just now approaching? His eyes followed theirs, he looked forth into the

murky November atmosphere, and saw that Palace-Yard was full of soldiers.

‘What is all this for?’ he asked of his gaoler.

‘They say Colonel Sydney is to be brought up for trial,’ said the man, indifferently.

Hugo’s heart beat wildly. Sydney’s prophecy was, then, coming true! ‘We shall meet again in London.’ Ay, indeed! In London, but in what a manner! The one coming forth from trial, knowing his fearful doom, the other going to receive the same mockery of justice at the hands of the same unrighteous judge.

But yet he should see his friend and teacher once more, and long months of suffering and confinement had made Hugo thankful for small mercies. He should see him once again, should meet him as he had foretold at Penshurst. And now they had almost reached the great doorway, and the tramp of the soldiers over-

powered the confused babel of voices in the hall. Still Hugo's gaoler led him on, hoping to get out of the building before the others entered it. But at the very threshold his aim was frustrated. Gripping his prisoner fast with one hand, he bade him wait till the incoming stream had passed by and had made motion more possible. Hugo, forgetting his doom, forgetting all but the thought of seeing Sydney, breathed a silent thanksgiving, and waited in eager expectation. Soldiers in bright uniforms passed by him, sweeping back the spectators ruthlessly, but taking no heed of the gaoler and the prisoner in the doorway,—his very misery was, in this instance, a gain. No one feared a rescue from him, no one cared for that one insignificant prisoner, with his hand-cuffs and his attendant gaoler.

He just stood against the old stone mouldings of the doorway, and the strong guard of soldiers passed on, and at length, looking out into Palace Yard, Hugo could

discern in the midst of them the dark, plumed hat which must belong to his friend. Slowly, steadily the procession moved on. Sydney drew nearer. Hugo could see his face now; he looked older; there were deep lines in his forehead and around his mouth, his cheeks were hollow, and, although he carried his head high, and bore his usual aspect of stern dignity, Hugo could see that he must have suffered much from the prison life, for all his air of health and strength was gone, and he evidently walked with an effort. Would he see him? Would he look up? That was now the question which occupied all Hugo's thoughts. That terrible, business-like tramp of soldiers' feet went on in maddening monotony. His friend drew nearer and nearer. Would he not give one glance in his direction?

Ah, yes! at length his earnest gaze attracted the Republican's notice. He looked up just before reaching the threshold, and their eyes met. Surprise, plea-

sure, regret, sympathy, encouragement, all blent together in that one long look, which was all that the master could give his pupil.

‘God bless you, dear lad,’ he said, and looked him through and through, looked at him long and lingeringly, as those look who are being borne away to some foreign land and bid a last farewell to the friends who stay behind.

And Hugo’s grey eyes lit up with eager love, and the memory of his doom passed from him altogether as he repeated the words of Sydney’s motto, *Sanctus amor patriæ dat animum.*

Sydney heard the words, turned back once more, and smiled, a smile which Hugo could always recall, a smile which lit up the stern, rugged face, and made it beautiful as a true and noble passion has power to do, be the features what they may.

Then the line of soldiers closed in around the prisoner, and soon all that Hugo could see was the broad-brimmed

felt hat and the brown periwig, the one dark spot amid the bright uniforms and flashing bayonets.

‘Now, sir,’ said the gaoler, giving his arm a little shake, to arouse him.

He glanced back once more,—caught a last vision of the old hall, with its dark, vaulted roof, its crowd of spectators, its bright line of infantry, and its patriot prisoner, then turned and followed his guide into the murky November air without.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

